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SEXUAL APATHY AND
COLDNESS IN WOMEN





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Sexual Apathy and
Coldness in Women

By

WALTER M. GALLICHAN

LONDON

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"The almost universal ignorance of matters of the most vital importance to the community, as well as to the individual, is scarcely less than amazing. It is much to be hoped that in the future the sexual process will be looked upon as something essentially beautiful and good."

Professor W. M. BAYLISS,
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SEXUAL APATHY AND COLDNESS IN WOMEN

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF FRIGIDITY

GENUINE love between a man and a woman, leading to mating, is based upon the attraction of the senses and esteem for mental and moral qualities. The reciprocal sympathy in emotion may be evoked in either sex primarily by the attributes that are generally known as "spiritual," or by a subtle physical affinity. In the first instance, passion-love is the sequel to a kinship of mind in all marriages of true affection. When devotion and fidelity follow upon the primary sensuous attraction, the majority of married persons find happiness in wedlock.

Whether love should arise first in the soul or the senses is an often-discussed question. Sexual love is a necessary end or result of sex differences in man and woman, and the appeal of vision and hearing is potent in both sexes. More archaic, powerful, and universal is the sense of touch. This instinct of

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contrectation is the oldest in animate creatures, and it plays a predominant part in human sexual selection. Touch has been called by Bain "the alpha and omega of affection." This impulse to touch and caress is shown in the love of parents for their children, and of children for parents. Such salutations as the kiss and the handshake are derived from this need of expressing tender feeling. The physical union of man and woman is the highest type of intimate contact, in the biological sense.

This act may symbolize all the finer affinities between the sexes, or it may be a degradation of both the partners. It is scarcely necessary to describe this differentiation. Everyone knows that the satisfaction of this imperious human instinct may be in accord with high social codes and noble behaviour, or an irresponsible, vicious indulgence. In a word, the physical intercourse of the sexes may be a means towards the development of a deep and inspiring emotion, and a tenderness that radiates from the family circle into society, or it may prove destructive to the individual, to offspring, and to the community.

It may be set down as a principle and a physiological and psychological fact that the love of the sexes necessarily implies erotic desire. This is not an affirmation that friendship between men and women cannot exist without fully conscious sex emotion. We are now discussing the love that seeks its consummation in conjugal living together, and the main pillar of that impulse is a desire for physical oneness

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in the embrace of marriage. It is a longing to gratify the potent instinct of contrectation. In the absence of this desire married life may, in very rare cases, afford the consolation of comradeship and a sympathy in views and aspirations. But this is only possible when both partners assent to this form of substitute or vicarious matrimonial cohabitation, and in such instances it must be inferred that the couple are sexually subnormal or impotent.

In the case of a normally-constituted man or woman wedded to a sexually anæsthetic partner, the results are almost always unhappy, or actually tragic. And the reactions are, in a great number of instances, not only felt by the ill-mated pair, but by their children and by posterity. The unwanted child of loveless, undesired marital intercourse is handicapped from the cradle. He is born into an atmosphere of, at the best, mutual tolerance on the part of the parents for one another, or, at worst, into a house divided against itself, where bickerings are constant, and both parents are disappointed with life and love. The children of sexually cold mothers generally show signs of emotional and neurotic disturbance at an early age. The phlegmatic may escape the perils of an upbringing in the midst of domestic disharmony, but the sensitive and tender-minded will undoubtedly suffer.

The frigid wife sheds an unconscious influence upon her children and those around her. She is often disappointed with marriage, with her husband, and

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even with her children. Her sons frequently develop cynical ideas upon married life when they reach adolescence. They distrust women; they tend to be sensual, but anti-feminine in their opinions. These are the young men who often assert that they intend to "think twice" before they enter the dangerous field of serious courtship.

The cold woman is frequently an austere prude. She may laugh or sneer at romantic love and "such nonsense." Her view of the opposite sex is a mingling of contempt and active dislike, which she expresses by insinuation, or by open denunciation. Her prudery, reinforced by unpleasant conjugal experiences, is manifested by reluctance to instruct her children in matters of sex. She is an avowed lover of "purity"; but she takes no wise measures to enlighten her children concerning the sexual life, and she refuses resolutely to enlighten herself.

The influence of the sexually-anæsthetic mother upon her daughters is even more marked than upon the sons. Frigidity on the female side is often noted among several members of a family. Many daughters of cold mothers die spinsters. They imbibe the maternal prejudiced ideas at the school age or earlier, and they grow up with a smouldering antipathy towards man. They are often disappointed with love, and if they marry, they develop shrewishness, and become naggers or termagants.

The cold-natured woman is often an active supporter of reformatory organizations, female emancipation

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crusades, purity campaigns, and societies for the suppression of vice. She comes very ill-equipped, emotionally and intellectually, into the field of social reform. Lacking understanding of the fundamental facts of life, and possessing far more zeal than knowledge, she may work more harm than good by her attempted reconstruction of public and personal morals.

As a teacher, the frigide wields considerable power over the unformed minds of her pupils. She rarely takes pains to examine the justice of her indictment of man, and her bias is obvious to those whom she instructs. Her prudery is often imitated by the girls she is able to influence.

The prevalence of inhibitions to the normal fulfilment of the sexual instinct can only be estimated by experienced inquirers and physicians. Some investigators of this problem among women of the Western nations are inclined to rate the proportion of frigid types as very high, while others state that from twenty-five to thirty per cent. are afflicted with this disorder. Many years ago Leopold Lacour, in a volume, "Humanisme Intégral," asserted that feminine coldness is not suspected by a large majority of men, and that there is among women "a legion of the eternally frigid." According to this writer, very few women are fully erotic, a view also announced by Lombroso, the Italian physiologist, who says that maternity is "an intense normal feeling" in women, but that "love is weak, and only becomes intense

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when it has reached the stage of a pathological phenomenon.”

The view that powerful sex ardour in women is pathological or exceptional has been stated by other writers on sex psychology. The evidence for this opinion is, however, extremely inconclusive. From the earliest times it has been said that women are even more passionate in love than men; and some modern inquirers affirm that sexual desire is as strong in the normal woman as in the normal man, though the manifestation of desire in the two sexes has certain differences.

Casual references to erotic coldness in woman are to be found in numerous writings of a non-scientific character, and in Continental and British novels. Zola has presented the problem in “*La Terre*,” and in England the phenomenon has been introduced in fiction by Thomas Hardy, in “*Jude the Obscure*,” by George Moore in “*Celibates*,” and Hubert Wales in “*Mr. and Mrs. Villiers*.” H. G. Wells has also noted this abnormal state in women. In a novel, “*The Veil and the Vision*,” I have drawn, in Constance, the character of a typically frigid woman.

In the course of this inquiry I shall quote the views of a number of well-known physiologists, psychologists, physicians, and social writers upon the symptoms and the consequences of sexual anæsthesia.

My own investigation during more than half a lifetime has convinced me that psychic sex coldness is an extremely common aberration in civilized

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women of all ranks of society in the West. Frigidity arising from defective structure of the generative organs is a far less common phenomenon. But many cases result from, or are complicated by, various functional derangements of digestion, menstruation, and especially by disorders of the internal or endocrine secreting glands.

The experienced observer cannot fail to detect the abnormality in a host of women. When we reflect that the main trend of women's education has been an attempt to bowdlerize and darken the most important facts in life, or to ignore them entirely, we shall feel no astonishment at the prevalence of sexphobia and its significant physical, mental, and moral consequences.

Most attractive women who have received the confidences of disappointed married men, bent upon intrigue, relate that their admirers refer invariably to the frigidity of their legal partners. This is, indeed, the commonest complaint of the unhappily wedded man, when he has gained the sympathy of a man or woman friend. The term "incompatibility" means, eight times in ten at least, that the physical relationship of husband and wife is unsatisfactory.¹

It must be recognized that even educated men and women employ camouflage in describing matrimonial trials. The reason for this ambiguity, evasion of fundamental facts, and palpable timidity in approach-

¹ Mrs. Leonora Eyles states that this is the commonest of marriage trials. "Family Love."

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ing the intimate topic, is to be found in the deep-rooted, long-established fear of sex. It is, therefore, necessary to disentangle the obvious untruths, and half-lies and subterfuges, from the actual and essential facts of most cases of marital misfortune.

This attitude is either real or assumed in the minds and behaviour of an enormous number of married and unmarried women. When simulated, it is a pose of superior modesty, purity, and refinement, adopted through the cruel severity of the sex taboo affecting women. For even a courageous, highly-intelligent woman undergoes a difficult struggle to free her mind from the hundred-and-one inculcated and applauded pruderies that pass for delicacy or refinement. She has to re-educate herself, to reject fantasy and myth, to confront a reality—which, through her juvenile training is terrible or repulsive—to admit desires that conflict with her standard of spiritual values, her æsthetic ideal, and often with her conventional ethical or religious ideas.

It is therefore beyond question that many women who are quite normally endowed with erotic longing and capacity, acting in protection of themselves against the suspicion of immodesty or sensuality, will deny with fervour the existence of a natural impulse within themselves. Sensuousness in love, they have been taught, is a crude weakness, imperfection, or gross salacity from which the "pure" or "nice" woman is immune.

Dr. Ernest Jones, one of the leading teachers of

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the new psychology in England, has pointed out the far-reaching evil effects of this attribution of amative desire to men alone. This falsity has been raised by an immense number of women to the dignity of a religious dogma. It is the cause of the most violent sex hostilities, married discord, psycho-neurotic symptoms, and sexual frigidity.

We must discount largely the avowals of a number of women that sex feeling is unknown to them. Positive coldness is a morbid affection, with definite symptoms, and it comes into the category of pathological states, equally with sexual impotence in the male. Sufferers from the disorder are fully conscious of the manifestations, and in many cases they wish to be cured as eagerly as the victim of neuritis or any other illness. The frigid woman, who is sufficiently intelligent and emotionally healthy to recognize that she is abnormal or subnormal, is to be regarded as the subject of a serious handicap, that can be, in most cases, removed by suitable remedial measures.

The prudish, but strongly-sexed, woman who prides herself falsely upon her feigned apathy towards the bodily intimacies of wedlock is, in one sense, an invalid, though not a true frigide. She is a moral invalid, because her mental posture is an insult to Nature, to true love, and to humanity. If she is religious, she is a rebel in her attitude to her Deity, who, according to the strict tenets of her creed, designed the very scheme with which she is at variance.

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The true subjects of sex frigidity are often capable of strong affection for the opposite sex. They may show jealousy in a marked degree, and other signs of a longing for the exclusive possession of a partner. In some the maternal instinct is normally powerful. It has been noted that cold women frequently bear a number of children. The relation of the maternal function to frigidity will be discussed elsewhere in this inquiry.

The paramount problem of the sexually anæsthetic woman is her incapacity as a wife. She is unable to experience that perfect sense of oneness with her husband, which is the true secret of happy wedlock, and the greatest inspiration in life. This disability, in the case of a truly affectionate woman, brings mental distress, and may lead to the development of psychoneurotic symptoms. She realizes her incapacity acutely and is bewildered by it.

The average medical practitioner often resembles the doctor mentioned by W. J. Robinson, of the Bronx Hospital and other clinical institutions, who, when consulted by a frigid wife, remarked that "he knew nothing about such things." Women who wish to rid themselves of the complexes that produce this physical recoil or indifference will not discover many physicians who have made a prolonged and diligent study of this intricate problem. In spite of our advance in several branches of medical science, the psychology of sex is not included in the medical course of instruction. Therefore only the few

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medical men who have undertaken a special study of frigidity can prove helpful to the afflicted.

Failing any useful counsel, the frigid wife who wishes to become a normal woman is likely to develop introspection, and to brood upon her strange abnormality. More than all, in the instance of a warm-hearted woman, the desire to be well is actuated by sympathy for the husband. The unselfish types of frigides often feel acute disappointment, due to the inability to respond naturally and ardently to their husbands' embraces. They realize how bitter is the chagrin of a virile, passionate man when he discovers that his wife is incomprehensibly irresponsive in the conjugal act. For many men this is the greatest trial that has to be endured. The husband of the positively anæsthetic woman may ponder wretchedly upon what he regards as a fraud. He is married, but yet unmated. He may be capable of the high form of altruism, which inspires some men in his situation to exercise tender, chivalrous patience. On the other hand, by far the majority of men married to unreciprocal women exhibit more or less resentment.

The feeling may be directed against Fate, or it may be strongly personal, and projected against the partner. The disappointed spouse reflects that he has been duped; that his wife has acted dishonestly. He may, as often happens, become entirely estranged, and his pristine love may turn to active or half-concealed hatred.

Many married men in early and late middle age

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have confessed to me that their desire for their partners has vanished. In most cases I have learned that the wife has shown positive frigidity, or a chilling passivity, from the bridal night onwards. The men who remain faithful to their wives under these conditions are a small minority. The majority are among the best clients of the courtesan, and some become infected with venereal disease. Frigidity in a wife often causes sexual impotence in her husband.

In 1898 I wrote, in my volume "Chapters on Human Love": "Frigidity is not simply a question for the pathologist and the student of morbid psychology. It is a matter of serious social importance. Conjugal calamity being so frequently brought about by the coldness of one of the pair, it is necessary that the idiosyncrasy should be reckoned with."

Since these lines were written, study and experience have confirmed my view that this question needs a more complete investigation than has been devoted to it hitherto in England.

CHAPTER II

VARIOUS CAUSES OF APATHY AND COLDNESS

THERE will seem to some readers no reason for repeating the biological fact that pleasure in a high degree is associated with the two great functions of feeding and the reproduction of life. The continuance of the species depends upon the healthy enjoyment of both functions. But there is an apparently anomalous tendency among a large multitude of civilized people to limit and minimize the enjoyment of the second of these functions. The source of this tendency is in the restraining ascetic ideals of cultured races, and in the puritanism that looks upon all pleasure of the senses with fear, shame, guilt, or contempt.

A reasonable asceticism is a sound moral discipline, and in some instances a means of attaining balance and harmony between the physical and intellectual activities of man. It is when the ascetic spirit comes into stubborn, irrational conflict with the main instincts of mankind that danger arises.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon these perils. It is enough to say that the fanatical recoil against "the flesh" has often aggravated the very evils that

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asceticism strives to suppress. European history abounds in instances of the interplay of extreme ascetic practice and the grossest manifestations of sexual vice.

Disrespect for the human body, deliberate neglect of health, uncleanliness, and an austere denial of the bodily appetites have been commended as the highest form of purity and piety. Marriage has been ranked as a sin, and love as a low, carnal passion, perilous to the soul. The terms of disdain and derision directed against the body and its functions would fill many pages of this book. They are the utterances of misguided and ignorant zealots, who unconsciously insulted the God whom they professed to revere.

We shall learn from the examination of the origin and results of sexphobia, in another chapter, that the aspersions upon the human body cast by those who, in another breath, described the body as "the image of God" and "the temple of the Holy Ghost," have menaced the higher and finer love between the sexes, and tended to a lowering of sex morality and national and individual health.

Psychic or pseudo-frigidity in either sex is frequently evolved from a false evaluation of the body and its functions. The fact that misuse of the body may cause moral and social evil of several kinds is not a proof that the body is in itself a "vile" thing. The hog in Nature is not evidence that Nature is wholly a hog in desire and conduct.

Psychic sex anæsthesia is a pathological condition

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of origin. It must be classed among the psychoneuroses, or minor disorders of mind. The defect is not a virtue. We may pretend to regard mental invalidism as a virtue, but Nature is not mocked, and the way of transgressors is hard.

Every organ of the human body has its purpose and function. Even the vestigial organs, such as the vermiform appendix, and the rudiments of a tail at the end of the spine, had their uses in the remote period of our history.

The elaboration of the genital organs in mankind has played a stupendous part in psychic development. All the activities that we rank as the highest are conditioned by the organs that ascetic fanaticism would class among the lowest.

The capacity for work, as for love and procreation, depends upon the normal functioning of the internal secreting glands, the thyroid, pituitary, thymus, pineal, ovarian, testicular, supra-renal, and interstitial. These are the "hormones," stimulators, energizers of the body and mind. Thyroid disease brings mental as well as physical injury, or total incapacity. A badly-working thyroid gland can incapacitate us for work or for love.

The secretion of the interstitial gland in the testicles of the male, and of the ovaries of the female, causes the highest emotions of humanity and is one source of the finest achievements, apart from the capacity to experience love and to hand on the eternal flame of life. The richly-endowed man or woman, morally and

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intellectually, is to a very large extent the product of fluids secreted by organs intimately linked with the organs of generation.

The thyroid enlarges at the period of puberty, and is the physical agent of the growth of the soul in both sexes. The mingling of the iodine and other constituents of this wonderful gland with the blood stream of a boy or girl effects all those corporeal and spiritual changes that we note in the adolescent.

The soul's awakening is the dawning of the passion of love for the opposite sex. And from this emotion is derived all that we include as the highest manifestations of human aspiration, conduct, sympathy, benevolence, artistic creation, and the social virtues.

In the male, the generative fluid, containing the sperm, or spermatozoon, which fertilizes the ripened ovum in the womb of the female, begins to be secreted by the testicles. Between the tubules that contain the spermatic fluid are secreting ducts, or cells of Leydig, which are now known as the interstitial glands. These glands have a very important function in human life, for the hormone which they produce are the determinants of masculine physical and mental characters.

Like the interstitial cells of man, the ovary of the woman secretes a fluid that determines the bodily and emotional feminine attributes. At any age from thirteen to eighteen, and until middle age, the ovaries of the girl contain the germs of a new life in the form of mature ova or egg-cells. At this time the

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maiden begins the transition from childhood to the adult stage; and womanliness is shown in her new outlook upon life, mental development, deepening of the emotions, interest in love, and various bodily transformations.

This flowering of woman, with all that it involves spiritually and physically, is the result of the activity of the ovarian secretion. It is held by some students of endocrinology, the science of the ductless glands, that a free secretion of the ovaries is the primary cause of a warm or amorous nature in woman, and that a deficient secretion induces erotic coldness.

Of the immense influence of this gland there is now no question among the physiologists who have experimented in rejuvenation. Dr. Norman Haire states that the implantation of an ovary in the body of an old woman has remarkable results. "If an ovary is transplanted from a young into an ageing female it ceases to produce ova, but continues to secrete hormones which circulate in the blood of its new host and produces great improvement in mental, physical, and sexual health, and stimulates the host's own ovaries to renewed activity of both its functions. The senile female becomes more vigorous, shows renewed sexual desire, exerts a renewed attraction over the male, and after a long period of sterility is once more capable of becoming pregnant and producing offspring."¹

Ample evidence of the weighty significance of a

¹ "Rejuvenation," Norman Haire, Ch.M.M.B.

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healthy ovarian gland activity is now available for the inquirer into this highly important subject. It is believed beyond doubt that the secretions of the sex organs in both sexes dominate character and influence individual destiny.

Ovarian inefficiency is one of the causes, if not the principal cause, of functional sexual anæsthesia in women. This condition may be inherited or congenital, or it may be induced by illness. The science of endocrinology is still quite young, and it is difficult to lay down definite rules of hygiene which will tend to the healthy functioning of the ovarian gland. It is, however, the opinion of investigators that a diet including all the essential vitamin substances preserves the proper endocrine balance of the body.

An inactive thyroid gland fails to secrete the very small quantity of iodine that is requisite for health, and the reaction on the sexual system may be marked. Iodine is contained in salt in the natural state, but not in ordinary devitalized table salt. The inter-relationship of the internal ductless glands has been discovered, and health depends upon the right balance of all these organs.

There is in women a special need of thyroid secretion for growth and bodily chemistry, mental development, skin action, hair growth, digestion, and resistance to disease.¹ Thyroid secretion is of especial importance in the maturing of the sex organs of women, and as a stimulant during pregnancy.

¹ See "Resistance to Disease," Dr. Harry Merrall,

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It is claimed that vitamin E found in germinal wheat, and to a less extent in peas and lettuce, has an effect upon sterility in women. It is probable, therefore, that a carefully selected diet aids the functioning of the ovarian glands to an extent hitherto unrecognized. Cooked foods, and especially tinned foods are often very deficient in vitamins. It is the view of Dr. Leonard Williams and others that cooking is the cause of a large number of human ailments. Any practice of healthy diet and general hygiene which benefits one set of organs may be said to benefit the whole of the physical constitution. Therefore, if the general health is good, we may expect a normal activity of the endocrine bodies.

It has been noted that persons with a vigorous hair-growth are seldom indifferent to the passion of love. Now, as a properly-functioning thyroid gland acts upon the growth of the hair, as well as upon the organs of reproduction, we may assume that the novelists who describe the abundant tresses of their ardent heroines have discovered a scientific truth without suspecting it.

In cases of frigidity when no marked endocrine disability can be traced, we can only conclude that the disorder is of mental origin. The physical, organic, or functional causes are several, and these are the only causes recognized by the comparatively few physicians in the past who have given attention to this subject.

In most treatises on the diseases of women

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occasional reference to sexual coldness will be found. There are several recorded cases of an entire absence of the major part of the reproductive apparatus in women. Lawson Tait and other gynæcologists describe such cases.

Women who are masculine in physical appearance, and in intellect and emotion, are very frequently incapable of erotic ardour. These half-men are also in many instances sex inverts, who are only able to develop ardent love for one of their own sex. Unquestionably, a considerable number of so-called "frigid" women are homosexual. They are not attracted to men, though they may be good companions to the opposite sex in everything save passionate love. Sexual inversion is more prevalent among women than among men. In the two sexes the proportion of cases has been estimated at two per cent.

Functional derangements of the genital system in women are a far commoner cause of frigidity in marriage than structural imperfections or the absence of organs. Falling of the womb is a common complaint among women, married or single, and any affection of the uterus may induce a repugnance towards intercourse. Tait noticed prolapsus, or falling of the womb into the vaginal passage, in quite young children,¹ and he states that protrusion of the uterus is "enormously frequent in our hospital clientele." No doubt many women who marry are

¹ "Diseases of Women," Lawson Tait.

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unaware of the cause of the internal discomfort or pain which they suffer, and married life may greatly aggravate the symptoms. Womb maladies have a marked effect upon the emotional nature, and affect the mind in other matters than love.

Amenorrhœa, suppressed menstruation, is likely to produce sexual coldness. The causes of this disorder are various. The normal cessation of the monthly period indicates pregnancy. But it may also be the result of an internal growth.

At the menopause, or change of life, the menstrual function ceases, or becomes an irregular, scanty flow.¹ Nevertheless, according to some observers, immature Graffian follicles are extruded as long as life lasts. These follicles in a woman, before the climacteric period, contain the ova, or female germs of life.

There are cases in which women have conceived and given birth to children although menstrual signs were absent. Suppressed menstruation is often cured by marriage, even though pregnancy may not occur. And the same may be said for other derangements of menstruation. There is no doubt that the regular healthy performance of the monthly function has a most advantageous psychic influence upon women; and that suppressed menses, painful periods, and excessive discharge favour the development of sexual anæsthesia.

Masturbatory practices, known as "self-abuse," so

¹ See "The Critical Age of Woman," Walter M. Gallichan.

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frequent among unmarried women, may, if long continued, produce sexual frigidity in natural intercourse. The habit, now generally referred to as an auto-erotic act, tends to blunt the finer sensibility for coitus in wedlock, and the practice is often preferred to the normal gratification.

The majority of female masturbators excite the clitoris, a small organ situated above the vaginal orifice, and it is only after the experiences of marital life that the vagina adapts itself to intercourse. This adaptation involves a very considerable alteration or modification of the feminine attitude to the physical expression of sex desire. Freud is of the opinion that many marriages are unfortunate because the woman is unable to adapt herself physiologically to a hitherto unexperienced situation. The initiation by the husband may be clumsy or brutal, and as we shall see later on, this is a not infrequent cause of marked sexual frigidity in wives.

We are only concerned here with the influence of auto-erotic gratification upon married intercourse, and that influence is believed by some inquirers to rank high among the determinants of frigidity. It is the tendency now among a slowly increasing number of medical writers to regard the auto-erotic forms of relief from tension as "a natural outlet for an unnatural state of affairs," and some have even declared that masturbation is entirely harmless.

Years ago, Sir James Paget, in one of his published lectures, made a similar statement, though he con-

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demned the practice on moral and æsthetic grounds. As Dr. Ernest Jones, the well-known psychopathologist, points out, the truth most probably lies between the two extremes of overstatement and understatement. It is demonstrable that long-continued masturbation, especially when accompanied by feelings of guilt or shame, as it often is, may produce neurasthenic symptoms in either sex, the act being more exacting upon the nervous system than normal intercourse.

My personal view is that excessive and protracted auto-erotic practices often set up a recoil from coitus, which may, or may not, be overcome through the intimacies of marriage. Undoubtedly, many married women continue the practice, though they may participate in intercourse as a matter of wifely duty. Dr. Bernhard A. Bauer, a Viennese gynæcologist, states that continual manipulation of the sex organs "may go so far that the woman cannot obtain an orgasm from normal sexual intercourse, or can only reach it with very great difficulty. This may lead to her becoming 'an unsatisfied woman.'"¹

It is beyond doubt that a vast number of prudish women, who affect a horror of sex, are constant masturbators. Some inquirers state that the great majority of single women, especially after the age of thirty, are addicted to one form or another of auto-erotism. The habit of erotic day-dreaming, noted

¹ "Woman," Dr. B. A. Bauer; English translation by E. S. Jerdan, LL.B., and Introduction by Dr. Norman Haire.

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among girls, has been described as "mental masturbation," and Dr. W. J. Robinson is of the opinion, which is shared by others, that this substituted form is "even more injurious than the regular habit."

Dr. Robinson believes that "the repression of all sexual manifestations, which the unmarried woman has to practise," is a foremost cause of sexual coldness. He ascribes the second cause to masturbation, and states that cases of the kind are noted every day in medical practice.¹

Dr. Iwan Bloch attributes marital coldness in women to auto-erotism, among other causes.²

Havelock Ellis is among other authorities on this subject, who holds that neurasthenia is associated with masturbation. He writes: "I am fairly certain that in many women, often highly intellectual women, the precocious excess in masturbation has been a main cause, not necessarily the sole efficient cause, in producing a divorce in later life between the physical sensuous impulses and the ideal emotion. This is a common cause of much personal misery and family unhappiness."³

Dr. J. F. W. Meagher, consulting neurologist, confirms the view that masturbation in women leads frequently to sexual anæsthesia. He repeats what other observers have stated, that "a large percentage

¹ "Woman, Her Sex and Love-Life," Dr. W. J. Robinson.

² "The Sexual Life of Our Time."

³ "Auto-Erotism," in "Studies in the Psychology of Sex."

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of young girls do not know of the existence of the vagina," and that auto-erotic gratification is found in manipulation of the clitoris or nymphæ.

Dr. Meagher records that his "case files show that it (masturbation) is four or five times as common in women as in men." Berger reckons the percentage of women addicted to auto-erotic indulgence as ninety-nine per cent. Meagher regards ten per cent. as "a conservative statement" in estimating the number of married women who masturbate. "Coitus without affection," he asserts, "is really a form of masturbation," and adds that many married women "develop the habit of masturbation as their relief from coitus, which they dislike. . . . All writers agree that chronic masturbation favours frigidity in woman, and sexual impotence in man."¹

The consensus of medical testimony that auto-erotism is extremely prevalent among women lends evidence to the opinion that this automatic form of satisfying the sexual appetite is a common cause of matrimonial frigidity. If our girls were rightly trained, they would learn the risks that attend the habit of constant masturbation. As it is, a large number discover the practice by accident, and are quite unacquainted, in many instances, with its association with the emotional disorder that leads to a repugnance for the proper gratification of desire in marriage. There are cases on record of women who have never been taught masturbation; but

¹ "A Study of Masturbation." 1924.

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probably the majority are instructed by intimate companions.

The policy of a complete repression of all sexual knowledge among girls results in an incalculable amount of misery, neurotic disharmony, physical ailments, disastrous wedlock, vice, and perversion.

In the next chapter other causes and contributing factors of sexual coldness will be discussed.

It may be well here to remind parents and teachers that much evil has been caused by exaggerated pictures of the disorders arising from masturbation. Many writers on the topic have shown that the old method of instilling terror has increased rather than diminished the tendency to auto-erotic practice. The counsel must be well-informed, in the first place; and those responsible for the care of the young, physically and morally, should consult the accredited works of modern scientific students of sex psychology and hygiene.

Much discrimination is requisite in the instruction of young people in matters of sex. The teaching must be soundly scientific, with the inculcation of an idealistic estimate of the passion of love.

CHAPTER III

OTHER CAUSES AND FACTORS

AMONG the causes of an unnatural resistance to the highest of the physiological processes, the act of marital intercourse, habitual constipation must be ranked as one of the most frequent. Many women who pride themselves upon a superior purity of mind in this matter are unaware that their internal organic uncleanness is the real source of their recoil from the conjugal love embrace.

Constipation is the bane of civilized human beings, the source of most diseases, and an accessory or primary cause of the unhappiness that is often ascribed to every origin but a foul intestinal canal. Women are frequent sufferers from this scourge of modern life. Miss Ettie A. Rout,¹ in her valuable book, "Sex and Exercise," insists upon the fact that "many gynæcological complaints are perfectly well known to be due originally to constipation."

The retroversion of the womb is often the result of the large bowel dropping out of its place. "The base of the womb," writes Miss Rout, "may actually

¹ Mrs. F. A. Hornibrook.

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rest upon the anterior wall of the rectum and thus cause obstruction, and accentuation of the constipated condition; hence painful sexual intercourse.”

Frigidity, in the view of this writer, may be congenital, or due to arrested development, atrophy, or absence of the organs of sex. The physical causes of sexual apathy have not been investigated as carefully as the mental causes.

Miss Rout's book should be read by all prospective brides, and women already married. She is convinced that the root cause of sexual anæsthesia is quite frequently *prolonged constipation*, and her directions for avoiding this grave malady are excellent and practical.

Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane is of the opinion that sexual frigidity is due to chronic constipation. He states: “Perhaps one of the most remarkable evidences of auto-intoxication in the toxic woman is the complete loss of sexual desire, it being in many cases replaced by a feeling of disgust for the normal relations of the sexes. The same applies to the male, but to a less degree.”¹

Intestinal cleanliness is the first law of health. It is, however, terribly neglected, and in this matter women are even greater offenders than men. A putrid fæcal mass in the bowels taints the whole organism, impairs the assimilation of food, poisons the blood-stream, and prepares the soil for germs of mortal diseases. Constipation mars the beauty of

¹ *The Lancet*, December 20th, 1919.

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woman, tinges the complexion yellow or mud colour, dulls the eyes, and renders the breath disgusting. It is also a frequent cause of depression of mind.

From the present point of examination, we may state that constipation is a formidable foe of married love and tranquillity in the home. Apart from the irascibility, hypersensitiveness, and gloomy moods that attend bowel derangement, constant constipation will render the naturally ardent woman a comparatively sexless being. As Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane testifies, a woman affected by self-poisoning, due to constipation, may develop sheer disgust for all expression of healthy, warm, conjugal affection.

The larger number of women are deeply concerned with questions of personal attraction and adornment of the body. Most of them are careful in their toilet, and preserve the cleanness of the exterior parts; but the majority are not heedful of the necessity for internal cleanness. Hence the enormous prevalence of ailments arising from constipation, and of sexual derangement.

Bowel action can be controlled by exercises for the development of the abdominal and other muscles, as described by Miss Rout; by an adequate supply of water and other fluid daily; by eating plenty of fruit, uncooked green vegetables, brown bread, and porridge. Laxatives and aperients are entirely unnecessary when the diet is natural and wholesome.

It is a physiological sin to permit constipation to

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injure the system. One might even class this neglect as a serious moral offence; for its effects react upon associates as well as upon the individual. The constipated person is diseased and unpleasant.

There are two disorders of the vagina that are likely to induce disinclination for conjugal intercourse. The first is vaginitis, which is often the cause of barrenness in women. This affection sometimes attacks young girls, and its course is often a long one. It arises from inattention to ablution of the external reproductive parts, from catarrh, or from measles, or scarlet fever.¹

The symptoms of the ailment are itching of the labia (lips) of the vagina, burning pain, and an offensive discharge. Frequently ulcers form on the labia, and the general health suffers, while the disinclination for the physical marital relation is often strong, which is due to the pain suffered during the sexual act.

Any morbid flow from the sex organs demands immediate close medical attention, as the discharge may become very obstinate if neglected, and may cause serious illness. Abscesses of the labia are not uncommon, and they may cause a loathing for intercourse.

The inner labia, the nymphæ, are subject to ulcerations and morbid mucous secretions. These lips are often damaged during the first intercourse, and coitus is painful and repellent until they are

¹ "Diseases of Women," Lawson Tait.

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healed. Tait says that the suffering caused by disorders of this kind threaten often "to break up a household." He adds that the reluctance of mothers to instruct daughters about to marry upon the physiological union "has to be paid for in much suffering among women."

The changes at the menopause in women often affect the nymphæ, and are the cause of many wives refusing to take part in intercourse. This malady is frequently painful and is accompanied by mental distress. Lawson Tait states that many cases of inebriety in middle-aged women can be traced to this disease.

Medical advice should be sought by all women who suffer from these inflammatory states of the sex organs. When neglected, they often lead to matrimonial disharmony.

Vaginismus is a spasmodic contraction of the vagina, which is apt to occur just before or during intercourse, sometimes rendering the act impossible. It is a nervous complaint of a complicated character, and some of the psycho-analysts attribute it to "the castration complex" in women. Briefly, this mental complex is a deep-rooted envy of the male, engendered in early childhood by the fantasy that girls have been deprived of the external masculine sex organ. Much evidence is brought forward by various psycho-therapists of the newer school in support of this theory.

Vaginismus of the true type is difficult to cure,

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and may be a complete bar to married happiness and the bearing of children. It has been stated that sufferers from this mysterious disease may be driven to suicide. Probably psycho-analysis is the only treatment that can remove the complexes that determine the symptoms.

The popular idea that a woman of the frigid order cannot conceive is entirely erroneous. Some wives who wish to avoid impregnation practise restraint during coitus, in order to hinder pleasure. It is likely that some spurious cases of "coldness" are due to this habit. The orgasm, or height of feeling, which is the finale of intercourse, is not positively essential for impregnation. It is, however, very probable, if not an actual fact, that normal enjoyment of the married relation favours the conjunction of the male and female generative cells. There are physicians who believe that proper, natural intercourse is an undoubted factor in the conception of offspring.

Frigidity often develops in women at the change of life, who until that period have reacted normally to their desires. The cause, as I have shown, may be physical and due to atrophy of organs, or genital disorder; but it is often psychic at this age. In "The Critical Age of Woman," I have referred to this manifestation of erotic indifference at some length.

At the approach of old age numbers of women are of the opinion that, morally and physically, they should restrain themselves. The idea that sexual intercourse should cease entirely with the coming of

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the signs of advancing age is fairly common. It has no rational, hygienic basis. As a matter of fact, moderate intercourse of the married in old age tends to preserve health of mind and body, and to prolong existence.

The too-commonly dreaded climacteric period in woman's life is often rendered quite unnecessarily distressing by the conflict of the mind with natural cravings. Although the menstrual occurrence ceases at this time, the desire for the love of the opposite sex and for intercourse remains, and may survive till late old age. Some women do not awaken to full passion until they are over the age of forty. This has been termed "the dangerous age."

The fear of pregnancy is one of the causes of pseudo, or psychic, frigidity. Women have told me that when women have borne and reared three or four children, they are likely to suffer extreme anxiety when they conceive again. Enforced child-bearing undoubtedly causes a recoil against the sexual relationship in a number of women. One woman assures me that the woman who has given birth to several children is "thoroughly disgusted with the whole subject of sex."

This repulsion is experienced by women who are not strongly maternal; but the average motherly types are not quite free from it, after bearing several babies. I have heard of women who cry, when approached conjugally by their husbands, through a terror of pregnancy. In such cases, the fear can be removed by

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the practise of one or another of the contraceptive methods. It is gross cruelty to compel a woman to bear an unwanted child, and the husband who imposes this suffering upon his wife has only himself to blame if she develops an aversion from his embraces. Enforced pregnancy brings discord and separation in many families.

CHAPTER IV

INNATE AND ACQUIRED FRIGIDITY

CONGENITAL, or inherited, sexual frigidity is regarded by some physicians as incurable. It is a debatable question whether some of the cases of frigidity described as hereditary or congenital are not in reality the result of affronts, or shocks of sexual character in childhood or adolescence. An early arousing of disgust for sex may affect the whole of the adult outlook upon love and marriage, and produce curious aberrations in emotion.

The true congenital frigid has masculine traits of physical constitution and of character. She is plainly mannish in appearance, and her tastes and habits are frequently manlike. Some sportswomen and female athletes are of this physique and emotional nature.

The masculine woman is not invariably homosexual, or inverted. She may be indifferent to any form of sex love. Defects in the ovaries, or the uterus, but principally in the former organs, are often found in the so-called "congenitally frigid" subjects. When a woman has suppressed or scanty menses, and a deficient ovarian secretion, her thoughts do not

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dwell constantly upon love. Her activities are diverted from the erotic and emotional sphere into professional industry, social work, politics, sport, study, and so forth. These neuter types of women often serve a very useful purpose in the community. Being immune from the attacks of Cupid's darts, they have surplus energy for work or play. If they are not very lovable, they are nevertheless useful to society.

No man is fully masculine and no woman is wholly feminine. Both sexes have vestigial organs of the opposite sex. In man we find a rudimentary uterus, traces of the vagina, and nipples. Occasionally these female characters are quite plainly shown. A kind of imitative menstruation has been noted in some men. In extreme examples we have hermaphroditism, two sexes in one individual.

In women the male penis has its analogue in the clitoris, a miniature male organ. The growth of hair on the body of woman, in other parts than the mons veneris, the armpits, and the head, is a masculine attribute. Many women grow hair on the lip or chin, especially after middle age. We find also defective bust development in the male types of women. Frequently, the breasts are exceedingly small, and the secretion of milk very scanty or absent.

There are also women with deep voices, and masculine muscle development, a manlike carriage, and narrow pelves. There are no "hundred-per-

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cent." men or women. Men have actually yielded milk from the breasts. Many women have passed as men throughout their lives, and fallen in love with a member of their own sex.

Charles G. Leland writes: "In exact proportion to male development in woman, or the female in man, there is a corresponding masculine or feminine degree of mentality."¹ Leland holds the view that the female elements of mind in man and the male elements in woman are the source of artistic creation in both sexes.

We are bound to admit that types of women exist who are born with an emotional and physiological incapacity in the sphere of love. They are natural impotents. Women of this conformation may marry from various motives, but it is doubtful whether they find felicity in wedlock, unless their partners are equally abnormal.

Referring to "the third sex," Iwan Bloch states: "There are two sexes only on which every true advance in civilization depends—the genuine man and the genuine woman. All other varieties are ultimately no more than phantoms, monstrosities, vestiges of primitive sexual conditions." Bloch adds that "the third sex" are like "the stunted barren workers among ants and bees." They are "incapable of prolonged existence, and will give place to a new generation of women."²

¹ "The Alternate Sex."

² "Sexual Life of Our Time."

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Man craves to mate with a feminine woman, and woman with a masculine man. And the true female woman is susceptible to all the tender emotions of love, able to reciprocate physically, and urged by her desires to seek a well-sexed male man. This is Nature's rule, universally and inexorably.

I have alluded to the heritable nature of sexual anæsthesia in the opening chapter. To my mind, there can be little doubt that the cold mother often hands on her abnormality to her children, and more especially to her daughters. Amorous energy is stated to be a hereditary quality. Cannot the same be said truly for frigidity? If a mother can pass on a tendency to pulmonary and other ailments to her children, she can bequeath to her daughters a tendency to defective action of the important ovarian glands. The masculine woman often produces masculine daughters.

Genuine congenital sexual frigidity is incurable. When this state arises from functional derangement, or mental causes, it can be remedied like any other curable disorder. The chief difficulty with the afflicted is that so few gynæcologists have made a comprehensive study of the phenomenon. The frigide who fully realizes that she is handicapped by her disorder, as a wife and the trainer of her children in the conduct of their love-lives, may seek long and in vain for a qualified counsellor.

Sexual frigidity in women is increasing in proportion to the modern trends of Western civilized life,

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The abnormality, as I have already indicated, is one of the most fruitful factors of married unhappiness, separation, and divorce. If the integration and solidarity of a society depends, as we are told it does, on harmonious family life, it is time to inquire into all the hidden causes that threaten domestic peace and happiness.

Those who maintain that the people of the older civilizations are "over-sexed" may urge that this is a contradiction to the view that frigidity is increasing. We have not any satisfactory evidence for the statement that the majority of civilized Western people are sexually hyperæsthetic, or over-sexed. There are many facts that lead us to an entirely opposite opinion. The free association of the two sexes among the young of our day has lessened, and not quickened, the purely sexual attraction.

Platonic affection so-called is far more usual than it was fifty years ago in England. A host of youths and maidens are good companions, without any obvious intrusion of actually erotic interest. Quoting the view of Lord Dawson of Penn, A. Ludovici¹ says that this eminent physician "has recently expressed the view that in England more harm is caused to young men by sexual abstinence than by indulgence; but very few people know the extent of that abstinence. It is not at all an uncommon thing to find men over thirty in this country who have never had any knowledge of woman."

¹ "Man: An Indictment."

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It is a very common feminine fallacy that "no men remain chaste until marriage." The taboo upon irregular sex intimacies is much stronger in its effects upon women than upon the other sex, but men, in possibly the majority, avail themselves of the half-sanctioned substitutes for matrimonial love. Therefore we may be fairly certain that very many men have had erotic experience before wedlock. But a large minority live in strict celibacy until they contract legal unions.

The strenuous modern hustle to gain subsistence, the nerve-racking conditions in which we live now, the spread of urban dwelling, and other causes, tend to the under-sexing of very many persons of both sexes. No doubt after the war there was a sporadic eruption of sexuality. But this is a temporary manifestation, and its prevalence has been enormously exaggerated.

The repression of the erotic impulse in the women of the Western races is directly contradictory to the supposition that sexual excesses are a sign of the times, and that the saturnalia is perennial in the towns of England. Some observers would assert that the dancing craze is a sign of increased sexual activity and licence. Of the connection between the dance and the passion of love there is not the least doubt, but it is in dancing that millions of people to-day divert or relieve erotic tension. The dance is in many instances a substitute for the amorous intrigue, and for promiscuous sexual intercourse.

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The would-be moralists who assail dancing seek misguidedly to banish one of the oldest means of relieving tension.

Frigidity is increasing at the very period when we have probably reached the furthest limit in sex repression and sublimation. It is in a great measure a result of repression in women. Hysteria is a very common disorder, and the hysterical woman is usually a victim of sexphobia, the horror of sex. Hysteria represents a vicious circle. It arises from over-repression, and fosters over-repression.

We will consider the various effects of psychic anæsthesia in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

NERVOUS AILMENTS AND SEX APATHY

DISHARMONIES arising from mental sources are termed "pathogenic in origin," and in modern medical psychology minor disorders of the mind are described under the general term psychoneurosis. These include hysteria, neurasthenia, morbid fears and compulsions, pathological anxiety, and hypochondria. To this list might be added drug-addiction, alcoholism, and sexual frigidity.

Neuresthenia is a word coined by Beard, an early investigator of this malady, meaning nervous debility, or extreme chronic fatigue of the nervous system. It is a very prevalent ailment of our age among civilized people of both sexes.

Dr. Ernest Jones defines true neurasthenia as a primary fatigue neurosis, and he attributes the symptoms to sexual causes, the chief being chronic masturbation in both sexes, and frequent nocturnal emissions in the male sex.¹ That many who practise various forms of auto-erotism escape neurasthenia is true; the neurotic symptoms develop, however, in

¹ "The Treatment of the Neuroses."

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those who experience acute remorse, a sense of guilt, shame, self-condemnation, and disgust with long-continued and excessive masturbation. Women are more liable than men to suffer from fatigue in work or recreation. Judging by the number of female neurasthenics, various emotional states are accountable for the ailment, and these states are often the result of a sense of guilt. Neurasthenia must be included among the causes of erotic coldness.

Men or women who "always feel tired," and are dyspeptic and constipated, are generally feeble in sexuality. The neurasthenic may even profess a "loathing" for anything appertaining to sex. Virility in man and its counterpart in woman are one of the tests of normality and vigour. Persons who are weak sexually are frequently inefficient in their work.

Hysterical women are sometimes advised to marry as a means of cure for their disorder. Such advice is very ill-considered. Marriage may increase the hysterical symptoms, because most women suffering from this disorder have sex repulsion. Nothing save a patient re-education of such women, by an experienced mental therapist, will banish the hidden complexes that are the origin of their disease. The hysterical frigide must be taught to face the realities of Nature, and to abandon her false perceptions of the "horridness" of sexuality. Drug treatment, change of scene, and other conventional means of dealing with this complicated neurosis act merely as

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palliatives. The mind must be healed first, and all the scruples and prejudices against the natural expression of the passion of love brought into full consciousness, examined, and dispelled.

Most of the psychoneurotic manifestations in women, often setting up sexual frigidity, are the effect of the ignorance, prudery, false ideas of morality and refinement, and superstitions, in which the vast mass of the female population are reared. Neurosis and sexual anæsthesia are the price that we pay for our disastrous neglect of scientific sex knowledge.

The neurotic woman enters the married state with an inculcated disrespect, or actual fear, of sex. She knows exceedingly little of her bodily structure and functions, and the real nature of her emotions. In many instances her husband is equally ignorant, but upon him lies the responsibility of initiation in conjugal intercourse. We need not wonder that most marriages are very far indeed from the ideal sung by poets; that sex antagonism prevails everywhere, and that divorce cases are common. I shall refer again to the prevalence of sexual ignorance.

The association of guilt with normal sex passion, even in matrimony itself, is by no means infrequent among women. Religious ascetic teaching not only disparaged the union of marriage for centuries, but it went further, as in some instances among the writings of theologians, and declared that wedlock was a sinful partnership. The present generation of

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women feel the cold hand of their puritanical ancestors upon their hearts and brains, when their thoughts turn to sex love, and they are sometimes stricken with a morbid and intractable horror.

It is not only the neurotic woman who shows this recoil from the physical side of the love of the two sexes. A large number of reputedly sane and educated women speak contemptuously of sex passion. Mrs. A. Grove refers to "a great number of women to whom all the preliminaries of the whole procreative system are distasteful and wearisome."¹

Such statements show how far we have rebelled against the plan of Nature in making the fulfilment of the reproductive function one of the chief sources of pleasure. There can be no question that Nature has taken immense pains to incite all living creatures to physical union. Her ingenuity in this respect is marvellous. Yet, according to the testimony of a large proportion of women, Nature's deliberate care to ensure enjoyment has failed in their own case. The pleasure has been transformed into a distasteful recoil, a dread, a painful process. The reason for this transmutation is an important subject of study, long neglected by psychologists.

That sex frigidity has been noted among primitive women is probably proved by the existence of aids to voluptuousness during coitus, which are in some instances the inventions of women. These artificial

¹ "The Free Review," Vol. VII, p. 433.

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aids have been described by Havelock Ellis, Bauer, and other writers. The use of magic philtres, love potions, and various stimulating drugs, foods and beverages of a real or alleged aphrodisaic character, practised in all nations, shows that erotic coldness is not quite unknown among savage and barbarous people.

It must be recorded that some of the eminent Roman Catholic moralists treated questions of sex with frankness and considerable intelligence. Sanchez, who wrote a volume on "Matrimony," alludes to frigidity in wives. Aquinas also refers to this abnormality. These teachers of the Church agreed that refusal to participate in intercourse was a sin among wives, unless a sound reason could be shown.

Since medieval times sexual anæsthesia has increased. Dr. Harry Campbell has stated that "the sexual instinct in the civilized woman is, I believe, tending to atrophy."¹

Professor Freud and his English exponent, Dr. Ernest Jones, both state that the physical relations of the sexes are becoming more complicated and difficult. Féré, in "L'Instinct Sexual," Moll, and several other medical inquirers, speak of the wide prevalence of feminine coldness.

¹ Dr. Campbell has investigated the problem of sex frigidity and recorded some of his observations in "Differences in the Nervous Organization of Man and Woman." 1891.

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Matthews Duncan, a famous gynæcologist, said years ago that the absence of sexual desire and sexual pleasure in women is thoroughly abnormal. He found that sterile women are frequently frigid.¹

¹ "Sterility in Women."

CHAPTER VI

SEXPHOBIA

THE horror of sex being one of the most frequent, if not the chief cause of sexual frigidity, it is necessary to inquire closely into the origin and the nature of this anomalous attitude. Sexphobia may be defined as a morbid fear of sexual activity, and a shrinking from rational reflection and discussion upon all questions relating to the psychology, physiology, and hygiene of sex.

This fear has been noted among primitive people in different parts of the globe, and the emotion is the basis of natural modesty.¹ In a rudimentary form, female animals below the human species display shame and modesty at those periods when the attention of the males is not desired. Women experience and manifest, as a rule, a higher degree of sexual shame than men, and this feeling has to be overcome by the more aggressive partner in the sex act.

The emotion of disgust has been studied carefully

¹ "The association of modesty and fear is even a very ancient observation."—Ellis, "Studies in the Psychology of Sex."

by Bloch and other medical inquirers; and these writers conclude that the sense of shame is fundamentally the fear of arousing disgust. We may ask: why has the union of the sexes, which, in modern men and women, has been invested with imagination, romance, and poetry, been regarded also with shame and disgust?

Years ago, in a communication to Havelock Ellis, I referred sex disgust to the fact that the organs dedicated to love are also employed in the function of expelling the waste products from the body. Hence the widespread repellent feeling in relation to the genital organs. This view has been brought forward recently by Dr. Ernest Jones.

In criticizing my statement, Havelock Ellis points out that "we cannot separate out any particular chemical or biological process and declare: This is vile. Even what we call excrement still stores up the stuff of our lives. . . . The mucous membranes of the natural orifices, through the sensitiveness gained in their own offices, all become agents to thrill the soul in the contact of love; it is idle to discriminate high or low, pure or impure, all alike are sanctified already by the extreme unction of Nature."¹

I am in complete agreement with Ellis that this is the sane view of the human body. Unfortunately this attitude is very uncommon, even among educated persons. A special process of education is necessary before the traditional disgust for the reproductive and

¹ "Studies in the Psychology of Sex."

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excretory organs can be banished from the mind of a civilized human being. And this form of education is not in the curriculum of the average nursery or school.

The child is told that the organs of sex are "nasty" or "dirty," and disgust is implanted in most of us at a very early age. All through our lives this feeling is reinforced continually, and heroic methods are adopted for negating the sexual and excremental functions. One of my friends has told me that, when a lad, he was instructed by his parents to avoid anyone seeing him enter or leave a closet. To secure this secretiveness, the boy often rose in the middle of the night to pay this necessary visit; and by the frequent retention of waste bowel products, he became chronically constipated in habit.

Shame for the body develops with the putting on of clothing, and the motive for wearing clothes is at basis a desire to attract the opposite sex. Tattooing is a prelude to the wearing of garments, and the main purpose of this method of decorating the body is erotic. It is usually practised at the age of puberty, when the sex passion is first strongly aroused. This, too, is the age of dressing in womanly garb among the girls of civilized communities.

The sense of shame for the sexual parts and their functions is extremely irrational, and it has led to contempt for, and gross neglect of, the body in mankind. Disrespect for the body is at the root of

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many false evaluations of sex, of pruderies of various kinds, of illness, and of some of the sexual perversions and vices.

This irreverence is a powerful factor in erotic coldness in women. The sexphobist is intellectually and emotionally diseased, though he or she may mistake the disease for a superior modesty and refinement. Persons of limited intelligence generally exhibit disgust in excess, and deliberately cultivate disdain for the organs and the offices upon which the perpetuation of humanity depends.

Crawley shows, in his extensive researches, that savage people believe sexual activities to be dangerous and weakening.¹ The hardy hunter and intrepid warrior must conserve his energy by every means; and sexual intercourse, it is believed, weakens a man. This archaic view is still maintained vigorously by a vast number of civilized persons, who have no knowledge of physiology or hygiene.

The early Christian philosophers were not all ultra-ascetic in their attitude to questions of sex. If St. Augustine thought that "sin had its special seat and symbol in the sexual organs," he thought also that the human body was a thing of beauty. Far more explicit in respect for the body are the utterances of St. Clement, and of Tertullian, who declared "there is no activity of the soul which is not manifested and conditioned by the flesh." Athanasius, too, said that "man is the handiwork of

¹ "The Mystic Rose."

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God. There is certainly nothing in us that is impure.”

This wholesome teaching of some of the Christian Fathers must be acknowledged and set against the mass of denunciation of “the flesh” issued from time to time by the zealots of celibacy and asceticism. But it must be admitted that, in the main, the influence of Christian teaching in matters of sex has tended to contempt for the “temple of the Holy Spirit.” The morbid views of emaciated, filthy, diseased fanatics, were held in deeper respect than the clean, healthy, and natural opinions of Clement and Athanasius. The gross terms of opprobrium cast upon love or sex by numerous ecclesiastics in medieval times reveal the extent of mental and moral degeneration which results from misguided pietism as opposed to pure religion.

A clergyman of the Church of England has written some wise reflections upon the ascetic recoil from sex. “The ascetic idea passed into Christianity, and exercised at one time a greater influence than the human and rational view of sex. There were gradations of opinion, illustrated by the thorough-going depreciation of the phenomenon of sex found in certain sects and unorthodox circles, and by Catholic utterances of the same feeling and tendency as those, though separable from them on logical grounds. . . . The ascetic estimate of the sex process was strengthened by being combined with the doctrine of original sin. This development was indeed largely due to St. Augustine, and it acquired so strong a hold on

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medieval thought that even Luther could not free himself of it.”¹

The association of the normal expression of the erotic impulse with sin and impurity still prevails in the Northern and Western races. We speak of “the innocence of children,” and the phrase means that innocence is only compatible with ignorance concerning the nature of sex, and abstention from sexual intercourse. Many people believe that celibacy is the higher moral state. Others hold that Adam and Eve were sinless before they discovered that they had sexual desire. Extreme fanatics still exist in Russia who practise castration as a means of escaping the temptation to sexual union.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to state that in by far the larger number of families, the idea that sex, *per se*, is impure, and therefore sinful, is diligently inculcated among the younger generation. The word “naughty” is used commonly in jest in regard to the exercise of the sex instinct in wedlock. Many persons regard all the sexual processes as “dirty,” “nasty,” or “low.” When the attitude to sex is not actually condemnatory on the score of sinfulness, it is often substituted by a disdain associated with “the animality of sex.” Many reputedly educated people speak of sexuality as the “bestial” or “animal” side of the love of the sexes. They forget

¹ For further discussion on the influence of religion in creating sexphobia readers should consult “Christianity and Sex Problems,” by Rev. Hugh Northcote,

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that all the qualities in human nature that we respect as the finest and noblest arise from the instinct of sex, and that our superlative virtues are the sublimations of the grosser appetites.

Prudery is on a different plane from true modesty. It is a form of pseudo-modesty, which is not natural to mankind, and is indeed a foe to modesty. It is not an entirely new convention, for, as Ellis records, there are traces of prudery in the old Jewish sacred books, "the feet being used as a symbol for the sex organs."¹ He quotes also this passage from St. Jerome in one of his letters to Eustochium: "These women speak between their teeth or with the edge of the lips, and with a lisping tongue, only half pronouncing their words, because they regard as gross whatever is natural."

Traditional prudery, augmented enormously by modern puritanism, is the source of the prurient and pornographic interest in sex. The reaction from false modesty is manifested in all classes of the community by the obscene jest, vulgar erotic anecdotes, the use of "double meanings," and the wide secret sale of indecent photographs and prints. Such reaction is inevitable. Human nature is outraged by prudery, love is slandered, and the body contemned; and furtive prurience, indecency, and vulgarity act as relief to unendurable repression in speech, and in thought itself.

Thus sex is driven from the sunlight as an evil

¹ "Studies in the Psychology of Sex," Vol. VI.

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or ugly thing, and banished to dark and noisome corners, or dragged in foul gutters. The attitude of the greater number of "civilized" people to sex can only be described as morbid and diseased.

Sexphobia is the origin of a vast number of cases of neurosis. Convincing evidence of this influence is to be found in volumes by Freud, Abraham, Jones, Frink, White, Pfister, Ferenzci, Stekel, Putnam, Jung, Coriat, and Bjerre, and other psychologists who have made prolonged studies of "border-line" cases of mental illness.

Professor Freud has shown that the severe repression of private thoughts that one is reluctant to mention, and are driven down into the depths of the unconscious mind, produce inhibitions that often lead to emotional disturbance, and even to the dissociation which is observed in some cases of hysteria. Frink brings forward much evidence of the relation of sex fear to neurotic disorder.¹ Many of the phobias regarding animals or certain objects arise from the inward conflicts of the repression of thought upon sex matters. "No aspect of the personality has suffered such manifold distortions and disfigurements as the sex instinct," writes Dr. A. White.²

Dr. I. Coriat states that "neurotic disorders arise from the blocking of the sexual instinct."³ "No mental processes are submitted to anything like the

¹ "Morbid Fears and Compulsions."

² "Mechanisms of Character Formation."

³ "Repressed Emotion."

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same degree of repression and distortion as those concerning sex," writes Dr. Ernest Jones.¹

We may be certain that the flight from sex into morbid prudery often leads to sexual frigidity. The prude of both sexes is a strongly-sexed type, in most cases; but mental conflict concerning the "wickedness" of normal desire may impede seriously the natural expression of sexuality. Hence spring many aberrations of the sex impulse, especially among women.

"Prudery is a 'feeble bluff,'" states Professor MacCurdy, "which the woman who is or was subject to sex fantasies makes in an effort to persuade herself and others that her mind is pure. For clear-eyed chastity she substitutes a myopic prurient criticism. Prudery is incapable of a lovely development. . . ." ²

Prudery, as Bloch remarks, "refuses to admit the purely moral-æsthetic influence of natural nudity—to prudery this is something immoral and repulsive." Bloch observes that cultured persons "look the natural in the face" and that "our virtuous hypocrites and fanatics of prudery invariably overrate sexuality." J. L. A. Koch has shown from his observations as a mental physician that the women who were at one time prudish are much more shameless when they become insane than women who accept the facts of sex naturally.

¹ "Treatment of the Neuroses." See also "Mental Conflict and Misconduct," W. Healy.

² "The Psychology of Emotion."

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Any manifestation of an exaggerated sense of shame respecting sex activity is unquestionably a mark of a low degree of intelligence, and of a false ethical standard. The spiritualization, refinement, and ennoblement of the most potent of the bodily desires can never be attained by a guilty, shamefaced, timid attitude towards sex. Biologically, sexual shame restrains mankind from unlimited lust and unsocial behaviour; but abnormal shame tends always to the degradation of sex, a lowering of true moral standards, and distortion of judgment upon human behaviour.

Charles Kingsley said wisely that all artificiality and prudery flies before the beautiful simplicity of the passion of true love. Prudery, by the concealment, repression, and revulsion from instinctive feelings, "heaps," as Bloch says, "fuel on the fire of fleshly lust." The forbidden topic of thought and speech tends always to become abnormally important to the sexphobist.

The manifestations of the "obscenity complex," arising from sexphobia, are of important psychological and social interest. The mind obsessed by the idea that sex is in itself unclean, repellent, or gross is capable of serious anti-social misconduct. This form of mania may be demonstrated by such actions as those of the priest who, as a matter of moral principle, mutilated naked statues in museums, or by zealous efforts to suppress the distribution of scientific works upon the psychology of sex.

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Many women who express a complete disinclination for enlightenment in questions of sex suffer from the obscenity complex in a severe form. They undoubtedly constitute a very high proportion of the pseudo-frigid class. Their resistance to the acceptance of the facts of the love of the sexes is frequently so stubborn that no kind of instruction appears possible in their case. They are supremely proud of their ignorance and sex apathy, which is manifested mentally and physically, and they regard themselves as a superior order of womanhood.

The prudish sex neurotic, as I have pointed out, often exercises a strong influence upon her children and her women friends. She exhorts young married acquaintances to "purity" in their conjugal relations, and counsels wives to avoid their matrimonial obligations. Husbands are, in her view, a regiment of brutal tyrants, who must be resisted by every possible means.

These sexphobists frequently separate for periods from their husbands, and in some instances a dissolution of marriage results. If they remain with their partners, they live either in hostility, or in a state of armed neutrality, which results in misery. The frigide is usually a highly jealous woman. More than the loving, ardent wife, she is exposed to jealousy and suspicion of her husband's unfaithfulness. It is not always the most passionate women who are the most profoundly jealous.

The frigid woman may be a typical erotomaniac.

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Her sexual coldness is compatible with a very powerful preoccupation with a highly sentimentalized notion of love. These women talk frequently of their "heart-hunger," their yearning for "an affinity" and their "soul-needs," and they complain of acute loneliness. This etherealized conception of love unfits them entirely as companions of virile men. They are too "good," too "pure" for a world in which the sexual method of reproduction is the only possible one.

The female victim of sexphobia who develops erotomania in more or less degree often forms "platonic" or "spiritual" friendships with men. She describes those companionships as "clean," and they are sought as a compensation for the "brutal" attentions of her spouse. This form of emotional infidelity is extremely common among frigid wives. The cold woman is often a confirmed flirt. Her philanderings are a vicarious outlet for her latent eroticism.

Frigid women are found in large numbers among the *demi-monde* and "kept women." In their careers they are generally successful. It has been said, indeed, that no really fervent woman can become a prostitute; for there is a barrier between ideal passionate love and mercenary sex intercourse, which many women cannot surmount without entire loss of self-respect.

But the cold, adventurous, clever frigide can deceive the average man with singular facility. She

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can feign emotional and physical ardour with the utmost skill. She is a natural psychologist; she knows masculine human nature, and possesses keen intuition and shrewdness. Many celebrated courtesans have admitted that their commercial success would have been impossible if Nature had endowed them with passion, warmth of affection, and a love for children.

The cold, mercenary wife, the prosperous *demi-mondaine*, and the luxurious mistress each regard men as over-grown, good-natured boys, who can be managed and exploited. Being devoid of passion, they are cool-headed and calculating. Women of this type often profess a contempt for men; but they prey upon them nevertheless. I have heard one of these women say that the choice of a wedding-costume was of much greater importance than the selection of the man who had to pay for it.

Many frigid women are more even-tempered and less subject to pique than their passionate sisters, and it is for this reason that men often choose them as wives. Coldness in a woman is frequently regarded by her lover as a sign of modesty and refinement. The shrew appeals to the type of man who declares that he admires women "who have no sentimental nonsense in them." He does not realize, until the marriage knot is tied, that the woman of his choice is sexually abnormal.

A. Ludovici says that "in Christian countries the sexual act is not quite free from associations of

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sinfulness.”¹ The girl who is described as “nicely brought up” has to reverse all her preconceptions of sexuality, to replace fantasy and superstition by biological and physiological reality; in fine, to undergo a process of re-education before she can become the true partner in marriage. Her sexphobia is often deep-rooted, and not even the wisest and most tactful of husbands may be able to expel it.

A young man of my acquaintance has told me that in a conversation with a girl, to whom his friend was engaged to be married, she stated that only if her future husband would consent to a purely platonic union would she be willing to marry. Many virgins make similar statements, in the full belief that their coldness and sexphobia are admirable moral traits and a mark of refinement. As the education of women in the home, the school, and in the world at large tends to the approval and the teaching of vigorous repression of thought and feeling relating to the realities of marital life, we need not be astonished at the frequent manifestation of this abnormal resistance to sex.

Beyond vague exhortations to “purity in thought and deed,” the average girl receives no moral, physiological, or psychological teaching upon her most powerful instinct and its proper guidance throughout life. This intellectual repression, and the stifling of natural curiosity by parents and guardians, produces in many young women a

¹ “Man : An Indictment.”

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reaction, and the search for enlightenment may become a secret obsession. One of Ellis's correspondents relates how she used to consult encyclopædias, in the hope of obtaining the forbidden knowledge. The writer of "A Young Girl's Diary," a remarkable human document, also records the secret searching of encyclopædias by two sisters, who are reproved by their father, when he hears of their investigations.

No doubt the full consciousness of the repression of knowledge, which incites to diligent inquiry, often prevents the development of neurotic disharmonies. It is the constant effort to kill the alleged "improper speculations" on the mystery of sex that results in many cases in one form or another of the psychoneuroses. Horror of sex, if it does not induce actually morbid fears or hysterical symptoms, will inevitably distort and warp the mind and emotional being.

Sexphobia in a marked degree should be classed as a disqualification for wedded life. It is the negation of love. Perfect love casts out all fear. Sex horror and disgust can only be regarded as entirely morbid feelings, and placed in the category of neurotic disorders. These violent repulsions serve no moral end, but on the contrary threaten the whole ethical or religious standpoint of judgment upon life and love.

The sexphobist is in continual enmity with the chief scheme of Nature. He or she refuses to face

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reality. "Frantic denials and furious suppressions indicate everywhere the cowardice and want of faith which conceive life as something too terrible to be faced," writes G. Bernard Shaw.

The recoil against the natural plan of reproduction is a constant menace to sane living, to sex hygiene, and sex morality. As Ellis writes, the attempted suppression of all literature that can be described as sexually suggestive, involves the suppression of "the whole world, beginning with the human race."¹ A logical application of the suppressive tendency of the sexphobist would reduce society to chaos, and destroy the whole of mankind.

The sufferers from the horror of sex narrow and limit the range of sex into simple carnal indulgence. They are incapable of comprehending the immense sway of sublimated sexual activities in every field of social reform, in religious fervour, in art, science, and all the outlets of human energy which we respect as the highest civilizing factors. Sexphobists are preoccupied only with the manifestations of physical love, though they avow a disgust for "sensuality."

"Sex penetrates the whole of life," as Havelock Ellis points out in more than one passage in his admirable "Studies." The prudish and the ill-educated restrict "the sex problem" to the act of bodily sexual union. Their purview never seems to soar into higher regions. They appear to search

¹ "The Task of Social Hygiene," "Immorality and the Law,"

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deliberately for ugliness; and "the beauty and sacredness of sex," of which Olive Schreiner and other well-balanced women thinkers have spoken with sincerity and reverence, is to them incomprehensible.

Mrs. Havelock Ellis has said: "Those of us who know the flesh to be as good a medium for manifesting the spirit as flowers for conveying sweet odours, cry in anger and despair, 'To the pure all things are pure, and to the puritan all things are impure. . . . There is nothing we could not be or do if, instead of degrading the sex function into dirt, we realized it as divine fire. . . . Sex is not a mania. It is a mysticism. . . . Even the mother-bird seems more capable of realizing the loveliness of sex and its mysticism than most of our moralists and our law-makers. It is time our mothers, our school-teachers, and our clergymen taught from morning till night that function on the sex plane is no more disgusting than function on the hunger or thirst planes.'" ¹

The rebirth of love is impossible until we have destroyed all the morbid resistances to a frank acceptation of the natural and the pure in sex. Sexphobia is utterly anomalous and irrational. It is an intellectual and moral abnormality, causing incalculable domestic and social misery and wrongdoing. In the causation of several of the physical diseases to which so many women are prone, sex

¹ "The New Horizon in Love and Life." Many passages of this volume by Mrs. Ellis express a sane and high evaluation of sex.

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ignorance is responsible, as Lawson Tait, Balls-Headley, and other specialists in the maladies affecting women have shown. The neglect of the sexual health of women is a menace to the happiness of the home, to the nation, and the race. Child-birth becomes more difficult and perilous, sexual incompetence and anæsthesia increase; and the minor derangements of the menopause become in many cases serious major ailments, through the neglect of sexual hygiene.

The maternal function, the highest function of woman, is fulfilled naturally and safely by animals in a state of nature, under the automatic direction of instinct. There is not a single civilized woman who can rely in this matter upon instinctive behaviour. The human mother needs instruction in the whole process of coitus, pregnancy, delivery, and lactation. This should be an important subject of feminine education.

But prudery and sexphobia strive to veil the whole subject of sex, and to render it an impenetrable mystery. An instructress of hospital nurses has told me that she has met women who do not know how children are born. Dr. Constance Long also refers to this profound ignorance among prospective mothers of the race. It is even considered a sin to inquire into the origin of one's own being! Every effort is made by the majority of our parents and teachers to deceive the child who is naturally curious concerning this problem.

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Most of the popular text-books on physiology exclude all allusion to the reproductive system and its functions. So morbid has the Western civilized mind become in regard to sex knowledge that every possible device and subterfuge are employed to deepen and perpetuate the abysmal ignorance. It is deemed a mark of refinement and virtuous superiority to exhibit a complete apathy towards sex.

According to A. Ludovici, in the book which I have cited, Englishmen are becoming more affected by sexphobia and prudery. This tendency is held by the writer to indicate male degeneration. Undoubtedly there is much truth in the opinion of Freud that a man's energy, courage, and adroitness in sexual activities is the key to his reactions in all the great affairs of his life.

Referring to asceticism, Ludovici points to the fact that "only the enormous age and vigour of the sex instinct in man could have resisted the lethal influence of this teaching." Certain of the Puritan moralists recommended complete abstinence in both sexes from sexual intercourse, and the whole tendency of these teachers was destructive of true ideals of marital love. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," brings forward instances of the hostility of Scotch theologians to love.

Centuries of denunciation and threat, the infliction of penances and punishments, and severe and unnatural repression of thought upon sex have left their unwholesome influence upon the Western

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nations. The reactions in vice, perversion, and disease have been plain evidence of the inevitable aftermath of fanatical methods of repression. A low regard for the human body, a furtive, shame-faced attitude to sex love, and sexual anæsthesia are the consequences of all unreflective, over-zealous, futile efforts to "expel Nature with a pitchfork."

The only way of sane wisdom and moral conduct in the relations of the sexes is thorough knowledge, and ever more knowledge, of the mysterious manifestations of the soul or mind of man.

CHAPTER VII

THE MISEDUCATION OF WOMEN

ONE of the most socially injurious fallacies of the feminine mind is the view that men are enormously more dominated by the sexual impulse than women. It is even held by an incredibly large proportion of women, especially by spinsters, that sexual desire and gratification are experienced only by males. This myth is the source of deplorable and often tragic misunderstandings between the sexes, of vehement sex antagonisms, of married misery and estrangement, and of distorted moral views.

Women who are strangers to love, through physical disability or psychic inhibition, regard the "sensuality" and "animality" of men with scorn or loathing. Girls in adolescence, influenced by the popular tradition of man's exclusive possession of lustfulness, often accept the error as an important fact of the differentiation of the sexes. It is upon this fiction that woman's belief in the higher purity of the female sex, as contrasted with that of "the questing beast," is usually based.

If every girl in the late pre-pubertal stage of her mental and physical development received, as many

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modern physicians and some educators have advised, a complete instruction in the nature and functions of her body and its relation to her mind and soul, the ascription of sexuality to the male alone would be regarded as an absurd fiction.

There is a biological reason for the feminine tendency to attribute extreme concupiscence to men. The instinct of rendering themselves physically alluring to men is intensely strong in women. It is biologically a desire to stimulate the male erotically. Manifestly, if the sons of men refused to look upon the daughters of men as fair and desirable, the whole edifice of social and racial life would fall into fragments. It is therefore natural that women should tend to exaggeration in their estimate of the innate sensuality of men. There is, however, an unconscious insincerity in the contradictory feminine attitude that men are over-sexed, and therefore less controlled and less "pure" than women, and that one of the chief aims of woman is to render herself attractive and desirable to man.

We find this view in a mass of women who are quite unconscious of their inconsistency. If the greater eroticism of the male is an indication of a double share of original sin, of a lower development, or of degeneration, the woman who deploras this inferiority in man should refrain from any behaviour that is liable to intensify man's lust.

The feminine indictment of man for his dominating sensuousness has been undefended by men for

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various reasons. The average man is, in theory, an upholder of female chastity. He demands virginal innocence in the woman whom he chooses as his wife, and in his daughters. The desire of the vast majority of Western men is that their brides shall be inexperienced, and as ignorant of sex as a child. And as this ignorance is esteemed as a virtue, it is manifest that the average woman is only following the rules laid down by man when she shows a real or feigned ignorance.

Frequently when a girl of the marriageable age seeks information from her mother, on the intimate relations of the sexes, she is told that the necessary knowledge will be imparted by her husband, and that it is unseemly to desire such enlightenment until the outset of wedlock. The advocates of plain teaching upon sex questions will be apt to censure the reticence of mothers, without extenuation. But the position of the parent is difficult. She may have suffered considerable anxiety through her own lack of knowledge. She may even have endured mental and physical torture as a wife.

The refusal of a mother to instruct her daughter in conjugal duties is not always a result of prudery or cowardice. Knowing the masculine mind more shrewdly than her daughter, she hesitates to remove the "bloom of innocence." We shall see in another section of this book how fatally ill-equipped are the majority of bridegrooms in the extremely delicate and difficult task of initiation in conjugality,

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The miseducation of women, in the very matters that most intimately affect their health and happiness, is largely attributable to man's aversion from the intellectual woman. It has been said, with some truth, by a thoughtful woman, that a man will turn away from a cultured woman, with a fine capacity for loving companionship, and fall violently in love with a pretty, utterly vapid *moron*, a giggling mental defective.

In matters of sex men in the mass have sought to guard the tree of knowledge from the approach of women. Often, in self-accusatory mood, arising from sexphobia, a man will lay it down as an axiom that the purity of women, by which he really means sexual ignorance, is absolutely necessary as a counteracting influence to man's impurity. "Men of the world" and *roués* are often fervent exponents of this reputed moral view.

The lack of education, and the false education of the chief agents in the perpetuation of civilized races, are among the primary causes of sexphobia and sexual anæsthesia. In other volumes I have given numerous examples of the evil and misery resulting from the neglect of sex teaching among adolescents of both sexes.¹

Hitherto, in the West, the main tendency of moral education has been a negation of sex as a central fact and problem of life. Attempts have been actually

¹ "A Text-book of Sex Education," "The Psychology of Marriage," and "Youth's Secret Conflict."

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made to deny the existence of the sex instinct. I know a man, now a middle-aged father of a family who, after hearing some of the usual vulgar allusions to sex from his school companions, sought a true explanation of the mysteries from his father. The reply that he received was: "It is all lies! There is no such thing as sex!"

This instance may be extreme, but it represents the moral and mental viewpoint of a multitude in modern communities. Immense, painstaking, intensely earnest endeavours are made to minimize the importance of sex to the individual, to society, and the race. Sex is a synonym for sin and impurity. Sex is "the lower instinct of mankind." Sex is a topic which we should exclude from thought, and so forth.

Viewing the enormous repressions, inhibitions, terrifying injunctions, and awful threats, it seems remarkable that there are not far more sexphobists and frigides than already exist. The explanation is that Nature is infinitely more powerful than Man in this conflict. The sex impulse is overwhelmingly mighty. The vast experiment of Nature, the reproduction of new types, cannot be interrupted by even the combined strategy of human beings, bent upon improving the natural plan.

Marital apathy and coldness are derived from the assumptions, the fallacies, and the pruderies that warp intelligence and encourage a puny defiance of inexorable natural law. The power of the taboo upon

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knowledge of the second great motor force of humanity has been colossal. When the Church was at the height of its influence, the study of anything even remotely connected with human sexual life came to be regarded as a sign of indecency and lewdness. Everything connected with sex was "filthy," and anyone who concerned himself with the subject was "degenerate and indecent."¹

Life itself is a manifestation of sex. Love is the source of human existence. Woman is the eternal gateway of life. These are truisms. Yet sex love, the most natural of natural phenomena, is considered still, by a great number of reputed "educated" persons, a subject that should be placed on the index of forbidden studies.

Apathy respecting wholesome inquiry into the nature of the sex instinct and its manifestations has, as a logical sequence, an apathy in regard to reproductive activity. Anything which is wrong to think about must be wrong to practise. This feeling is apparently ingrained in many women, and in a smaller number of men. The view that the conjugal embrace is a sacramental act, which has been expressed by several high-minded men and women reformers of sexual morality, is, indeed, the only possible attitude of the truly spiritually-minded. The opposite view that such physical intimacy is unclean, lewd, or a

¹ See "Modesty and Chastity in Woman," in "Woman," Dr. Bernhard Bauer; Havelock Ellis, "Sex in Relation to Society"; and "Man," A. Ludovici.

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mark of weakness is, from a strictly Christian standpoint, an insult to God.

Any system of education among the young that fosters, directly or indirectly, the pernicious association of legitimate sex intercourse with filthiness or shame is injurious to true morality, to sanity of thought upon other affairs of life, and a menace to national health and race progress. If we deride, mock, besmirch, and condemn sex, we need feel no astonishment that a host of civilized people behave crudely, viciously, cruelly, and uncleanly in gratifying the sex urge.

The term "sexual immorality" is used by a number of would-be reformers of society, without any heed to the fact that the very secrecy in which sex is shrouded stimulates all kinds of indecency and misconduct. It is irreverence for sex that induces obscenity and vice. Men do not scathe that which they regard as truly sacred. Tell a boy that sex is filthy, and he will live filthily. Tell a girl that sex is disgusting, and she will enter wedlock with a dangerously distorted preconception, which may shatter from the beginning every chance of love, and entail torture for herself and her partner.

Sexual anæsthesia is an instance of the great need of a sane training in the art of married love. The psychic apathy, or complete distaste, shown by an enormous number of women in conjugal intercourse could be prevented, and probably banished, if both sexes were as serious concerning the reciprocal

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physical tenderness as they are about the selection and furnishing of the home. Without the sense of complete oneness of body, the twain made one flesh, the promise of happiness and peace in matrimony is meagre indeed.

For intellectual sympathy between husband and wife does not of itself forge the wonderful link that secures permanent affection. The erotic and æsthetic attraction of sex must have its full evaluation; for this attraction is essentially the dynamic of the spiritual affinity in successful marriage. The spiritualization of the union of two normally-sexed persons has never been realized by a contemptuous disparagement of the act of physical conjunction. We cannot separate the emotions of the soul from the secretions, the nerves, and the bodily activities.

The flight from sex is a practical outcome of our monstrous lack of teaching upon the nature and conduct of sex energy or libido. Men should know that women are less quickly eroticized than themselves; that women's attraction to men often develops without conscious sexual desire, and that wooing before every coitus is the universal law in the animal kingdom. Women should recognize that, according to the law of periodicity, the monthly cycle, they are not always, as in the case of a virile man, emotionally and physically inclined to intercourse. The days of the month immediately preceding and following upon menstruation mark the period when the desire is strongest in most women.

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To ensure procreation, Nature has devised that man shall be more or less apt for sexual union at all times. It is a physiological law, and not perversity, nor sin, that makes the male constantly ready to perform his part in the act of reproduction. Much idle and acrid discussion upon the relative control and continence of the two sexes would be avoided if all girls at the age when marriage is probable were instructed in this fact of the difference in the constitution of man and woman. The common view is that men are less restrained, more sensual, and more grossly carnal than women, and this charge has been urged with great emphasis by extremists in the movement of feminine emancipation. Ellis, Bauer, Bloch, and numerous students of sexual science have shown that sex plays a more dominant part in the lives of women than of men. This, however, is not an assertion that women in the average are as readily aroused sexually as the greater number of men. The evidence that woman is more sexual than man is afforded by the physical conformation of the female, the menstrual function, impregnation, gestation, and lactation. Reproduction in the male sex is an act of minutes. With women it is a long and arduous process from the moment of conception to the weaning of the infant.

Menstruation has been likened to a mimic or missed pregnancy. Women, whether married or single, produce the potential life-cells every month, and long before puberty immature ova are in the ovaries. The

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supreme natural function of woman is the shaping in her own body of offspring. Marital and maternal love form the true destiny of the normal woman.

The pages by various writers upon the relative strength of erotic desire in the sexes would, if collected, fill a bulky volume. Probably the best collation on this question is that of Havelock Ellis, who cites many and varying opinions. The more scientific observers undoubtedly bring forward convincing evidence that the sex impulse is as powerful in women as in men. The only marked difference is in the attainment of the state of tumescence, or sexual tension, in the sexes. In women this condition is the result of emotional stimuli aroused by a chosen partner whose magnetism evokes the desire for bodily contact.

Ellen Key writes that love begins in the woman's soul and descends to the sensual plane, whereas in man the passion is born of the body and may, or may not, ascend to the spirit. It is not true that universally modern men are first fully-consciously drawn to women by the physical appeal. In the majority of men bodily charm in a woman is the most potent lure. But a somewhat large minority of men who are attracted by women are not at the onset conscious of purely erotic desire. The attraction is sometimes based on an intellectual sympathy, a tender feeling not plainly realized as physical; or in some instances upon pity and chivalrous idealism. A woman in helpless distress appeals very pro-

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foundly to a tender-hearted man, and sympathy for suffering may grow into ardent affection.

The sexuality of woman is more dependent upon the parental feeling than the sexuality of men. A longing for children is the main, and often the sole, reason for marriage in many women. It is very infrequently the chief reason why a man marries. All the bewildering whims and tactics of the woman in love selection can be traced to the maternal instinct, and the semi-conscious or unconscious seeking for the ideal father, the dependable protector of the family.

The extremely maternal woman is not in every instance a passionate or strongly-sexed wife. It is commonly inferred that the highly erotic woman rarely makes the perfect mother. Weininger arbitrarily divided women into two types, the maternal and the prostitute.¹ Undoubtedly the famous amorists among women have not gained an equal reputation for the exemplary fulfilment of the maternal duties.

The consideration of a form of pseudo-sexual coldness arises from the question of the miseducation of women. Many women who declare emphatically that they are free completely from erotic feeling, and uninterested in topics of love and sex, are in reality highly susceptible to desire. Thus, if one questions a number of women concerning the prevalence of sexual apathy, the reply in many cases is: "Sex does not trouble *me* in the least." The most flagrant

¹ "Sex and Character."

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case of this deceptiveness known to me was that of a young woman who, though she professed an icy indifference to "such nonsense as sex," ran away from her husband and two children, and cohabited with a married man who, after giving her syphilis, went away with another woman.

The wife of a medical friend of mine questioned several women among her acquaintances concerning their conjugal relations. Nearly all of them affirmed that they had no pleasure in sexual intercourse. Women separated for long periods from their husbands often declare that they suffer no sexual deprivation. Several cultured and observant women have assured me that there is no question upon which there is so much lying among their sex as this one. It may be added that a lack of veracity and candour about sex matters is also exceedingly common among men.

Women who have been reared in the belief that sex is improper and disgusting will naturally attempt by all manner of evasions and untruths to repudiate their own erotic desires. The feminine tendency to untruthfulness on other matters than this may be derived from the constant effort to conceal natural yearnings and to appear conventional.

Men are to blame for this deceptiveness in women. The average man zealously protects his women-folk from approach to the perilous tree of knowledge. "There are things no nice woman should want to know," is a common remark of Englishmen,

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In an endeavour to elicit the candid views of women on the problem of frigidity, it is necessary to use caution, for it may be taken for granted that a very large number of even intelligent women will not tell the truth in such a delicate matter as personal sex experiences.

Both men and women of the Western and Northern races spend a large part of their energy in trying to prove to themselves and others that questions relating to sex do not interest them. This attitude is incomprehensible to the majority of the Latin and Southern people, who regard love as equally important to bread-winning. Such morbid preoccupation with means for proving an indifference to sex is a plain sign of intense sex self-consciousness. Luther admitted that the more he sought to avoid all thoughts of an erotic character, and the more severe his penances, the more he burned.

Stendhal has some sensible reflections upon the miseducation of women.¹ "The amusing thing," he writes, "in present-day education is that you teach young girls nothing they won't have to forget as soon as they are married. . . . And thus under the vain pretext of decency you teach young girls nothing that can give them guidance in the circumstances they will encounter in their lives. You do more—you hide and deny these circumstances in order to add to their strength, through the effect (1) of surprise, and (2) of mistrust; for education, once found deceitful, must

¹ "On Love," English translation,

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bring distrust on education as a whole. I maintain that one ought to talk of love to girls who have been well brought up. Who will dare suggest in good faith that, in the actual state of our manners, girls of sixteen do not know of the existence of love? From whom do they get this idea, so important and so difficult to give properly? Think of Julie d'Etanges deploring the knowledge that she owes to la Chaillot, one of the maidservants."

To a very large extent in our own time, the sexual enlightenment of a host of young girls is imparted by ignorant domestic servants, or by foolish and vulgar companions. Stendhal observes that the education of women is "the most delightful absurdity in modern Europe." He claims superiority for the women of Italy and Spain, who, though less educated in one sense than their Northern sisters, have not been mis-educated in the vital questions.

Our reticences, evasions, pruderies, falsehoods, and condemnations assist in the production of "the sour, shallow, sexless shrew" who is "an impostor as a wife, and her marriage is a fraud."¹ Stendhal describes modern female education as a "delightful absurdity." It is also an absurdity with tragic consequences.

So profound is the reluctance to allude to anything connected with the terrible tabooed subject of sex that an enormous proportion of British mothers fail to

¹ "Anatomy and Physiology in Character," Dr. Furneaux Jordan,

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prepare their daughters for the first appearance of menstrual signs. Many women have recounted to me the fear and disgust that assailed them at this crisis in girlhood. There is ample medical testimony concerning the derangement and serious maladies that occur among girls who have had no instruction in sex hygiene. In some cases the alarm at the flow has led to attempted and actual suicide. There is no doubt that this fear is an accessory factor of psychoneurotic illnesses in many cases.

A mother of a charming family informed me that she had no warning respecting the oncoming of menstruation, and no counsels of hygiene. While engaged to be married, she asked her mother to enlighten her upon the physical intimacies of wedlock. The mother sternly refused to discuss the awful topic, remarking, "You'll find out." It may be said that many besides have "found out" to their cost, and that of their husbands, that maladroit initiation has induced intense psychic resistance to marital intercourse.

The horror of sex is encouraged sedulously from early childhood and throughout life, and at equal pace with this misguidance there develops the tendency to befoul sex love, vulgarize it, render it hideous and revolting, and to practise all kinds of unwholesome vicarious satisfactions. Gourmandizing and excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquors are frequently disguises of love that has been unnaturally repressed.

Boys and girls who have been brought up in an

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atmosphere of sex horror are frequently pathological masturbators. Schoolmasters and mistresses are aware that the children from puritanic, prudish homes are the most addicted to this habit. Frequently the well-meaning youth or maiden, zealously protected from any sensible information upon sex behaviour and hygiene, go the furthest astray from the straight path of chastity.

The "dreadful" theme of sexual love is, as I have shown, interdicted as a proper study, and left to the vulgar pornographer, who is in many cases the only instructor of the boy or girl. Ill-balanced, super-fastidious, criminally timid adults refuse to enlighten their children, who are told that it is wicked to even think about such things. The racial organs, the very agents of our being, are described as "dirty" and "improper" objects.

"The poet, the ascetic, the theologian and the shrew," says Dr. Furneaux Jordan, "imagine that they have settled certain questions when they have called them 'animal' questions. Claiming to be the friends of animals, the word 'animal' still remains their expression for the bitterest contempt. . . . When such phrases as 'animalism' and 'indecent' are bandied to and fro, it may be replied that sexless men or sexless women who, professing to be what they are not, invade (no matter under what cloak of religious ceremony or legal enactment) the deepest privacy of others, are surely guilty of gross indecency at least, if not of cruel imposture."

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Our inadequate and, in many cases ludicrous, lack of education in the central fact of human life is a factor of psychic sexual anæsthesia and of various degrees of the mental disease of sexphobia. Our attitude to sex is irreligious, in the broad sense of the term. It is an insult to Nature and to Mankind, the acknowledged highest achievement of Nature. It is a form of rebellion that can only be described as ridiculously puny and futile. To deny sex is to deny life itself.

That the sex impulse, though a benign natural force, may become in some circumstances a formidable agent of destruction is quite true. Repression of this tremendous energy, this libido, or vital urge, is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the individual, the community, and the race. Sex in its highest sublimated expression is all that we most prize in human endeavour and achievement. Love is the eternal "law divine." But love, like all else in instinct and emotion, is ambivalent, possessing a positive and a negative pole. Lust or love—for the two words had originally a similar meaning—may become the source of the deepest misery, as it is of the highest rapture and happiness. This passion can incite to every kind of anti-social conduct, to prostitution, heartless seductions, sexual offences against children, perversities, cruelties, and murder. The abuse of the religious feeling, as history shows on a thousand pages, has caused terrible wars of nations and sects, persecutions, torture of mind and body, and

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many other evils. In like manner love has led to conduct which is the very reverse of tender emotion.

We need rational sex repression. But the question is to decide to what extent we dare thwart the strongest passion of humanity. Over-repression, as an increasing number of psychologists and moral philosophers recognize, may induce the same or worse evils that repression seeks to check or remove. It has been said that he who would make the angel may find that he has made the beast. Probably, as Dr. Ernest Jones and other psycho-therapists believe, we have reached the furthest limit of sublimation.

Unquestionably the most urgent problem of the advanced Western nations is that of the means, the extent, and the results of sex repression. It is a vital question for the individual. What has been the result of long-continued and drastic over-repression of the erotic instinct? We are told by investigators that although professional prostitution is declining in England, irregular sexual intercourse is increasing in all classes.

The enormous incidence of neurotic disease should cause us to reflect whether undue repression of sexual libido must be regarded as a safeguard of mental health, or the opposite. It is now maintained by an ever-growing consensus of authoritative opinion that the neuroses, and some of the psychoses, are the symptoms of a hidden conflict between instinctive cravings and the moral codes of the community. The neurotic, generally speaking, is a would-be good man

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or woman, who fails to adjust moral views and conduct to the realities of life.

The suppression of all direct, conscious thinking upon sex may be the mistaken "ideal" of a large number of people, but the outcome of ignorance and of disrespect for the generative organs and functions is the misuse of a valuable potential energy. Sex libido that fails to find a natural outlet, or a means of diversion into other forms of energy, becomes a peril to mental sanity, and sometimes to physical health.

It is perhaps necessary to repeat that the modesty and coyness of women are normal manifestations. They are compatible with a passionate nature and strongly developed sexual energy. But they must not be mistaken for pathological apathy to sexual activity. Such indifference is an anomaly; for, as I have said, Nature has exercised the highest ingenuity in providing special glands and nerves, and an elaborate chemistry, for the purpose of rendering the sex act intensely pleasurable and strongly desired.

The influence of the mind upon the healthy development of sex desire and the reproductive function is of supreme importance. Copulation in the human species is not a purely instinctive automatic act, as it is with animals below mankind in the evolutionary scale. It is indeed through the love activities that the human being has risen above his lowlier animal kindred. The love of a poet is, one need hardly state, infinitely more complex, imagin-

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ative, and psychic than the mating impulse of a blackbird, one of the most constant lovers among birds.

Amorous passion in mankind, in its higher manifestations, is of the spirit, not only of the body, and it is invested with poetry, romance, and æsthetic refinement. There is among many human beings an exaltation and a worship of love for which we have the evidence of innumerable poems and works of art. Instinctive sex hunger becomes transformed, idealized, elevated, and refined in the higher types of men and women.

This recognition of the beauty and the dignity of sex love is the saving grace of humanity, but it is by no means general. A re-education is often necessary before a man or a woman of the so-called cultured classes can discard the teaching that sex is shameful. For example, in a questionnaire among a number of college women in America, as to the proper topics of discussion, a considerable proportion of the interrogated replied that all matters bearing upon physiology or sex should be banned.

The morbid shrinking from all dispassionate, intelligent, scientific examination of the sex instinct reacts inevitably upon the love-life. If we were taught that eating is a disgusting and degrading practice, we would not be astonished that talking about food was considered a flagrant offence against decency. The act of eating would become a furtive form of enjoyment, and feelings of guilt and shame

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would act detrimentally upon appetite and the digestion and assimilation of food.

The prevalence of what may be called sexual dyspepsia is due to wrong psychic feeling towards sex. This disease is one of the commonest, though it is not labelled and classified. Very few women lead healthy sex lives. And the reason is that very few women receive any sound instruction upon the *vita sexualis*, its nature and phenomena; in fact, we tell young women that the less they know about the structure of certain parts of the body and the purpose of those organs, the more refined and pure-minded they will remain.

The taboo upon sane instruction in sexual psychology and hygiene, on the plea that ignorance is the best protector of virtue and purity, is the source of the fantasy-weaving and morbid day-dreaming of a host of young girls. The number of sex-fantasies collected by the psycho-analysts is a revelation to those who imagine that reticence upon sex is the best method of repressing sexual thoughts. These fantasies are, in many cases, almost incredibly monstrous, and they are often a continual pre-occupation during puberty, and even in adult life.

Continuous solitary and secret speculation upon the mystery of sex love, frequently accompanied by erotic day-dreams, may tend in predisposed girls to neurotic illness of an intractable nature. In other instances, the clash between the fantasies and the realities of married life induces frigidity.

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Lifelong sex apathy, even acute repulsion, may arise from a young woman's astounding and alarming experiences of the wedding-night. The astonished cry, " I did not know that marriage meant this ! " is far from uncommon among brides in the Western nations. Even those girls who have received what is termed " the higher education " are very often entirely unacquainted with any of the sexual processes. There are instances of newly-married women separating from their husbands, of suicide, and of annulment of marriage, through shock endured during the honeymoon.

The vast majority of brides are completely ignorant of the fact that one of the most important organs of the body is, in a virgin, a hitherto unused organ, which has to be adapted to its proper rôle in the procreative act. Unlike the clitoris, in the larger number of maidens, the vagina is a dormant organ until it is suddenly, and often violently, aroused to activity. Without any mental preparation for the physical consummation of marriage, a young bride is exposed dangerously to the risk of nervous disturbance, psychic sexual frigidity, an emotional recoil from her partner, and physical injury. Occasionally, serious bodily suffering ensues through the complete incompetence of husband and wife in the most momentous of all physiological acts.

Whenever we are faced with a case of feminine repugnance towards conjugal intimacies, it is necessary to inquire into the upbringing of the

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subject. In most examples it will be discovered that no advice of a vital character has ever been offered to the afflicted woman. Further, we shall learn that the desire for necessary knowledge was considered indelicate, and that continual effort has been made to combat all sexual curiosity in the defence of "modesty" and "purity." Need we wonder that the often crude, bungling, or unconsciously or consciously sadistic initiation by the bridegroom so frequently causes in his bride a dislike, or a positive loathing for physical union?

Very many inexperienced women, probably the majority, feel anxious and bewildered on the eve of marriage. Vague speculation, absurd fallacy, whispered hints of the necessity for being prepared for a painful ordeal, acute bashfulness, and even terror itself may reduce the expectant bride to a state of hysteria.

"I knew nothing whatever when I married" is a remark that I have heard from scores of women. The dread of the first night is a very profound emotion in many women. It is curious that the terror is not more frequent among the uninstructed. For we have to consider that millions of girls are educated in the view that sex desire *per se* is improper or wicked, and that this becomes a principle, a creed, a fixed belief.

The natural desire, according to this distortion of apprehension, is likely to be feared or hated, and attempts, involving much emotional stress and expenditure of nervous energy, are made constantly

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to drive the desire from consciousness. Expelled from the fully-conscious mind as something abominable and evil, the longing is banished to the depths of the unconscious stratum of the mind. Its reappearance henceforth is in the disguised form of dread. The wish is never annihilated.

This common mental conflict leads in numerous instances to psychoneurosis of an obstinate character. The affected person's dread of sex becomes strangely transformed into a morbid fear of all kinds of objects and actions apparently unassociated with sex. The phobia may be attached to cats, birds, spiders, church steeples, doorways, or anything, animate or inanimate, that symbolizes sex to the archaic unconscious mind.

Women suffering from repressed sex complexes abound in every rank of the advanced civilized communities, and swell continually the number of malcontent wives, frigides, hypochondriacs, drug addicts, alcoholics, and nervous invalids. Such is the price, as Dr. Ernest Jones has stated, that we pay for our hypocrisy.

Ignorance and neglect have made most of us more or less sexually insane. There is no subject of thought in existence which is so crassly distorted, crudely apprehended, misrepresented, ridiculed, reviled, and degraded as that of sexual love.

CHAPTER VIII

SEX ABERRATIONS

THE sex instinct, through its variation in individuals, its complexity, and its association with the deepest emotions, is exposed to risks of inharmonious and abnormal development. The instinct may be perverted, and the most eccentric forms of sensual satisfaction substituted for normal coitus. A considerable proportion of women suffer from perverted sex feeling, and in consequence find life difficult, and ordinary wedded union disappointing.

Strange as it may seem to those who have not studied the psycho-pathology of sexuality, a proportion of women united with husbands of a gentle and compliant type are acutely dissatisfied with wedlock. Throughout the whole animal kingdom, including mankind, we find that the rôle of the male in love is in part aggressive, while the female who is wooed is, in a certain degree, passive, or semi-resistant.

A full examination of this scheme of Nature will be found in the writings of Havelock Ellis.¹ It

¹ "Love and Pain," volume in "Studies in the Psychology of Sex."

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may be sufficient to state briefly that the tendency among women to masochism may become a marked perversion. Masochism, or algolagnia, is a desire to suffer pain, in a greater or a less degree, as an accessory of sexual gratification. In extreme cases, the pain that is desired is of a severe nature.

Normal aggressiveness in the male appeals to the female in the same measure as coyness and slight resistance appeal to her partner in the sex act. More or less pain endured by the woman is often the accompaniment of an initial intercourse. If the pain exceeds the pleasure, a strong recoil may cause the woman to regard the act as cruel. Freud holds the view that for this reason the bridal night is fateful. If the initiation is painful or repellent, and the bride is led to suppose that the bridegroom is cruel, or reprehensibly clumsy, she may develop a sudden revulsion of feeling, which will probably cause a hatred for her spouse.

On the other hand, when the pain is recognized as an inevitable accompaniment of the consummation of marriage, and there is full assurance in the wife's mind that her husband has tactfully and sympathetically allayed her fears and minimized the suffering, there is every probability that the sex act will strengthen the woman's affection and bring a sense of complete union with her partner.

Therefore the normally developed woman is willing, as part of the price of love, to submit to the necessary process of defloration. A certain degree

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of playful roughness on the part of the spouse is by no means distasteful to many women. But when actual pain is strongly desired by a woman, deprivation of this adjunct to sexual intimacies may bring discontent.

I do not propose, in this volume, to relate instances of the perversion of algolagnia. It is enough to state that there are English women who crave the endurance of pain at the hands of a man. The masochistic suggestiveness of a considerable number of novels, chiefly written by women, and keenly enjoyed by women readers, should convince the inquirer that in some degree the desire for the shiekh type of husband is far from rare.

The innately masochistic woman is not among the true frigid class. She may be extremely ardent. But she will be apathetic or manifestly cold in her marital connection with a husband who does not understand her idiosyncrasy. It is well known that women who have been icy in a marriage with a first husband frequently show every sign of sexual normality in a second marriage.

Sadism, or the desire to inflict pain, is an exaggeration of man's natural aggressiveness in love. Men with a sadistic streak may discover congenial wives among the masochistic women. Frequently, when they unite with a woman of a more normal type, sadistic men experience disappointment in wedded life, and resort to other women.

I have known cases of masochistic perversity in

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women of gentle birth, which they have themselves attributed to the early arousing of sex sensibility through whipping inflicted by older persons of the other sex. There is no doubt that both sadistic and masochistic aberrations are very frequently caused by the association in childhood of sex feeling with the endurance or imposition of pain.

Alcoholic excess in a husband renders many women apathetic to the sexual embrace. The approach of a semi-intoxicated spouse will often cause a wife to shrink with disgust from his fondling. Even the odour of vinous breath is sufficient to repel a number of women. On the other hand, it may be said that the habit of heavy drinking is often induced in husbands married to persistently irresponsive wives.

Jealousy and suspicion of a husband's infidelity will arouse in some wives a recoil from sexual relations. The discovery of deceptiveness on the husband's part will estrange some women. Even strong difference of view between a married pair, on questions of domestic management, expenditure, and the training of children, may produce sexual coldness in the wife. Unpleasant personal habits in a husband will often cause disgust in his wife. Untidiness in attire, neglect of the toilet, offensive breath, bodily malodours, and skin eruptions are also causes of frigidity in some instances.

Sex inversion in women, or homosexuality, is a not uncommon source of conjugal unhappiness.

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Many women are in a slight degree affected by the inverted sex feeling, which causes them to form highly sentimental friendships with members of their own sex. If men in the average showed an inclination to caress other men, they would be suspected as inverts. So great is the horror of homosexuality in men that circumspection in their association with other men is often carried to what may seem absurd lengths.

Social custom permits a more close intimacy between women and women than between men and men. In most of the schools and colleges for women of the Western races, there are instances of extremely emotional companionships between women. These manifestations of the growth of love in adolescence often provide problems for parents and teachers.

The abnormality in question has been studied by a number of mental physicians, and there is now a considerable number of volumes upon the subject. One of the most notable is by Havelock Ellis,¹ who states that "homosexuality has been observed in women from very early times, and in very widespread regions." Ellis describes a class of women who "seem to possess a genuine, though not precisely sexual, preference for women over men, and it is their coldness rather than lack of charm which often renders men rather indifferent to them."

Referring to the true type of inversion in women, Havelock Ellis says: "As a rule the inverted

¹ "Sexual Inversion."

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woman feels absolute indifference towards men, and not seldom repulsion. And this feeling, as a rule, is instinctively reciprocated by men. . . . The chief characteristic of the sexually inverted woman is a certain degree of masculinity.”¹

This phenomenon of misdirected love is discussed at some length by the Rev. H. Northcote, in its relation to morality.² Ellis holds that the question is psychological and medico-legal, and “so full of grave social actuality that we are bound to face it.”

The congenitally sexually inverted woman may enter the married partnership for social or pecuniary reasons, and she may have concealed her aberration from her future husband. Generally speaking, strongly homosexual women do not marry, but many women with a slight tendency in this direction fall in love with men. In some cases the ensuing union may be fairly successful. There is, however, always the risk that inverted feeling in a woman may be intensified, if the marriage is unsatisfactory. Many cases of matrimonial disharmony can be traced to inverted sex emotion in one or other of the pair.

This form of “sexual colour-blindness,” as it has been termed, is not incompatible with a capacity to evoke and reciprocate love. But the love is directed

¹ C. H. Ulrichs, Westphal, Charcot, Féré, Tarnowsky, Von Krafft-Ebing, Bloch, Moll, Kiernan, Hirschfeld, and Raffalovitch are among the accredited scientific authorities on this subject.

² “Christianity and Sex Problems.”

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towards a person of the same sex. For this reason, the experiences of married life are very liable to induce sexual frigidity in the normal relation. A person of either sex who is conscious of an inverted tendency has no justification in marrying, unless the chosen partner has been enlightened concerning its existence. In some cases known to me, the marriages of women of this type to normally sexual men have proved unhappy.

This divergence of the sex impulse from the normal is in some cases corrected by psycho-therapeutic treatment, and there are a few physicians in Europe and America who are consulted by homosexuals and perverts. The prevention of sex inversion cannot be discussed here; but it may be said that a lack of right training in childhood and youth, in sexual behaviour, fosters this anomaly and many other abnormalities of an erotic character. The wonder is that more of us are not divergent types in matters of sexuality.

CHAPTER IX

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

SEXUAL anæsthesia in women is often caused or aggravated by the sheer incompetence of the mass of Western civilized men in the intricate and delicate art of love. In the conjugal physical relations of the sexes, the part of instructor has been allotted to the male sex. It is the man who, in the words of Shakespeare, unties the virgin knot, who reveals mysteries hitherto completely veiled from the eyes of his bride, who arouses in her latent, and often scarcely suspected, psychic feeling and organic activities, and who implants within her the cells that fertilize the awaiting germs of a new human being.

Judged biologically, and from a moral, social, and racial standpoint, this is the most momentous hour since birth in the life of a man or woman. It marks a great epoch in personal history, and may influence the whole of the community and a long line of posterity. It is a consummation that may bring the rarest happiness known to mortals, a seal and a sacrament, a wondrous mingling of two souls and bodies, and a new revelation of the force of Nature.

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Among some of the people of India, where the art of love is a part of religious devotion, the bridegroom offers a solemn and beautiful prayer to his Deity before enfolding the beloved in his arms. The bridegroom has been instructed before he essays one of the most fateful tasks of his manhood. He has read the wise, sympathetic, explicit, and hygienic counsels of his great philosophers and saints concerning the psychology of maidens; and he possesses a surer, safer guide than the feeble, waning instinct of the highly civilized man.

No matter of personal conduct in advanced civilized life is so neglected as the art of love.¹ Breuer and Freud, in an important contribution to the study of hysteria, state that the bridal night is often a rape, and that shock leads to neurotic disturbance in the bride.² Ellis relates that six married women, questioned by a woman friend, in one day, concerning their experience of the wedding-night, declared that sexual intercourse was a shock to them. Kisch says that dyspareunia, ill-adaptation for sex union, is astonishingly frequent, and he corroborates the statement of Freud and others that defloration is often a rape.³

¹ See "Sex in Relation to Society" and "Little Essays of Love and Virtue," by Havelock Ellis; "The Psychology of Marriage," Walter M. Gallichan; and "Sex and Life," Dr. W. F. Robie."

² "Studien über Hysterien."

³ "Sexual Life of Woman."

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Adler attributes some cases of permanent frigidity in wives to the misunderstanding by men of the psychology and physiology of women without sexual experience. "A large proportion of cold-natured women," he writes, "represent a sacrifice to men, due either to unconscious awkwardness or, occasionally, to conscious brutality towards the tender plant which should have been cherished with peculiar art and love, but has been robbed of the splendour of its development. All her life long, a wistful and trembling woman will preserve the recollection of a brutal wedding-night, and often enough it remains a perpetual source of inhibition every time that the husband seeks anew to gratify his desires without adapting himself to his wife's desires for love."¹

Nietzsche draws a powerful picture of the state of mind of the young wife. He begins by stating that all the world agrees to educate women in ignorance, and to implant shame for physical love in their minds, "And then! To be hurled, as with an awful thunderbolt, into reality and knowledge with marriage—and indeed by him whom they most love and esteem; to have to encounter love and shame in contradiction, yea, to have to feel rapture, abandonment, duty, sympathy and fright at the unexpected proximity of God and animal, and whatever else besides! all at once! There, in fact, a psychic entanglement has been effected which is quite unequalled. Even the

¹ "Die Mangelhafte Geschlechtsempfindung des Weibes."

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sympathetic curiosity of the wisest discerner of man does not suffice to divine how this or that woman gets along with the solution of this enigma and the enigma of this solution.”¹

Here I anticipate the conventional query: “Does not *instinct* teach the vast majority of men and women how to perform the reproductive act?” My answer is an emphatic negative. The greater part of primary instinct in this function has been lost by the people of civilized countries, and replaced by a number of psychic inhibitions, superstitious fallacies, fears, unhygienic counsels of ignorance, vague presuppositions and incompetence, all based upon “reason.”

Years ago Sir James Paget said that modern civilized men and women have lost instinctive direction in this matter, and that men need to be taught coitus. Many physicians since that was said have confirmed this opinion. Modern works on sex hygiene contain references to the common ignorance of men, and the mental and physical injury that often result from it.

Dr. W. F. Robie speaks of the fear and trembling with which a girl approaches the wedding-night. “They look forward to what should be the happiest period of their lives with dread, and oft-times look back upon it with disgust and loathing. The young man also approaches the mystical chamber with fear and trepidation. He knows more about sex than the

¹ “The Joyful Wisdom.”

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girl, but even his knowledge is incomplete and mixed with much of the vulgar and obscene.”¹

Dr. Robie states further : “ Instinct, which has been too often trusted as an infallible guide, may lead you in devious paths. It takes good care of the lower animals, for they have not the complexities of modern civilization to start cross-currents in the direct-flowing streams of their uncomplicated lives.”

Dr. Bernhard A. Bauer, in the volume that I have already mentioned, writes that “ The first act of sexual intercourse, the defloration, makes a deep impression on the mind of woman. Whether or not she is conscious of the awakening of her repressed sexual desires, every girl looks forward with fear and trembling to that hour which will bring the loss of that so long-guarded, so long-defended possession—virginity! ”

Among many men of various ages who have sought my advice on the eve of wedlock, I have met four who had not even the crudest understanding of the performance of the procreative act. They were as uninstructed in the matter as young children. And almost all of the inquirers possessed only a rudimentary knowledge. Where was “ natural instinct,” that unerring guide to the mouse or the bird, in these educated human beings of adult age?

It is probable that successful marriage may result in cases where both of the pair are very poorly equipped with knowledge. But it is far more

¹ “ Sex and Life.”

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probable, as daily experience shows, that happiness and health will be endangered. It may be many years before the sexual life of the couple is adjusted to each other's erotic idiosyncrasy or natural needs. A medical friend tells me that his wife's attitude to sex, due to bad influences in childhood, remained almost intractably repugnant for fifteen years. In some marriages, probably in a large percentage, reciprocal adaptation in bodily intimacies is never achieved, and divorce is the only way of release from an insupportable and galling yoke.

Sexual frigidity in women is so frequently the inevitable outcome of erotic maladroitness in husbands that it is necessary to devote several pages to the consideration of this cause. Woman has been likened to a complicated lock, which only the right man, possessing the right key, can unlock.¹ Women, too, have been compared with delicately-fashioned, sensitive violins from which only a skilled player can produce sweet music. In short, women are more complex erotically than men, and the whole art of love consists in an accurate and sympathetic insight into feminine psychology.

Man's responsibility for the sexual apathy of women is very great, for his is the privilege of sex supremacy and leadership in consummated love. We have noted that the vast host of modern women in the more advanced cultured nations are abnormally inhibited in thought upon sex relations. It is chiefly through

¹ Havelock Ellis, "The Sexual Impulse in Women."

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masculine influence that feminine resistance to sex knowledge has become so formidable. In his effort to "protect" woman, man has educated her sedulously in every principle of ignorance. He has said to the maiden, "You must not know," and to the wife, "I alone am your rightful instructor."

The trouble is, however, that extremely few men are qualified to teach the art of love, for they are themselves untaught. The experience gained by many men in pre-matrimonial intercourse with women of the *demi-monde* is not an adequate source of enlightenment concerning the psychology of refined young women, reared in strict notions of propriety and delicacy. The coarsening effect of these commercialized relations with professional prostitutes, who are frequently abnormal women, *morons*, or incapable of real passion, may be the worst conceivable preparation for union with a virgin.

A young man's preparation for marriage is usually neglected to such an extent that, with the best of intentions and the warmest affection for his bride, he may still commit serious errors, unwittingly and ignorantly. It is truly a very serious reflection upon our morality, and our alleged chivalry and high regard for women, that one of the most grave and fateful actions of a man's life is undertaken in light-hearted or complacent ignorance.

Plain directions to prospective husbands concerning the conjugal intimacies are, to my mind, best conveyed by word of mouth. And it is necessary that the

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counsellor shall be free from the apologetic attitude, and competent to discuss sex topics. The subject must be regarded as equally legitimate as feeding, as ethics, geography, or any other important study. The instructor may be a doctor, or an experienced layman who has studied the subject in a scientific spirit. In any case, he should be a married man of mature experience of life.

Explicit sexual information through the medium of writing is almost impossible under the conditions relating to the dissemination of knowledge upon sex in some European countries, and to some extent in America. The hindrances to the spread of sound and explicit scientific education in this matter are still numerous, and often highly obstructive and injurious alike to morality and health. There are still many persons, claiming to be cultured, who would discountenance, if they would not legally suppress, any form of sex instruction. Therefore, the most practical and useful volumes treating upon the psychology of sex are generally costly, and not readily obtainable, while in some cases they are published with the proviso that they shall be purchasable by medical men only.

It is rational enough to practise the locked bookcase policy in respect to certain volumes written for advanced scientific students, from the fear that they may excite morbid prurience in persons of a prurient nature, or that they may needlessly bewilder and possibly alarm the young. But every man and

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woman about to marry has the right to demand appropriate knowledge relating to the dual and social responsibility of husband and wife. He should be able to obtain the requisite written counsel as readily as he can buy a book upon diet or general hygiene.

Our posterity will look back with amazement upon the folly and the evil of the bans upon sexual science that now exist. Undoubtedly, the restriction is lessening, and it is now possible for young people nearing the adult age to obtain clean and practical counsel upon sexual hygiene. But, as Dr. Norman Haire states, in his introduction to Bauer's volume on "Woman," there is "a lamentable lack of genuinely scientific treatises on sex written in such a way as to be intelligible to the serious student."

Dr. Haire continues: "Sexual ignorance and bigotry are responsible for the majority of unhappy marriages," and that "traditional judgments on sex matters should not be accepted without full examination." He adds that our muddle-headed outlook on sex "gives rise to an appalling amount of quite unnecessary suffering."

The bridegroom should know several important facts upon the mind, the emotions, and the outlook of his bride. A much greater chance of happiness in marriage would be ensured if betrothed couples revealed their thoughts upon love and sex more openly than they do. Very frequently the transition from the bride's standard of propriety to familiarity

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with speech and conduct that seems indecorous is too sudden and violent. As I have stated elsewhere, a single phrase, uttered in good intent by a bridegroom, may appal his inexperienced, bashful, and hyper-modest partner.

It is very necessary that a young husband, who desires above all things that physical union shall deepen his wife's love, and form a real link of soul as well as of body, should realize that, in the highest probability, the bride is quite unfamiliar with the structure of the male generative organs, that she shrinks from the spectacle of nudity, and that she may be surprisingly ignorant of the form of her own genital parts. Delicately-reared girls are often amazingly uninformed concerning their bodily conformation, and afraid of everything directly or indirectly associated in their minds with immodesty. These hyper-sensitive, tenderly-nurtured, and carefully shielded girls require all of a man's tact, sensibility, solicitude and skill in the difficult task of initiation. The brute or the bungler may, in a brief hour, estrange for the whole of wedded life the affection of such maidens, and arouse an incurable recoil from the love embrace.

I must repeat that psychic frigidity in many wives begins on the wedding-night, and that the cause is often to be sought in the husband's lack of requisite psychic insight and physical aptitude. Every act of intercourse between the higher animals, except man, is invariably preceded by the wooing of the female

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by the male,¹ and every physiologist knows that the preliminary tenderness, the foreplay, is natural and necessary. So much depends upon the behaviour, the understanding, and the skill of the husband that the importance of knowledge in the initiator can scarcely be over-rated.

The shamefaced attitude to the sex act, the association with guilt—a relic of ancient asceticism—the sense of “yielding to the lower instincts,” and all the prejudices and pruderies handed on from generation to generation, and constantly reinforced, exercise very frequently a malign influence in the marital relationship. One of the most frequent sources of feminine coldness, and even intense loathing for intercourse, is the husband's crude notions of what constitutes “conjugal rights” from the woman's point of view. Some men are accustomed to demand intercourse at any time, regardless of the physiological law of periodicity in women, with its accompanying heightened desire, and unheeding of the fact that a very large number of women must experience psychic love-emotion before they can become willing partners in the sexual act.

I have observed many cases of estrangement and final separation of couples arising from the unemotional dullness, the unsympathetic attitude, and the clumsiness of husbands. Lord Dawson of Penn says that sex love is “something to prize and cherish for its own sake. It is an essential part of health and

¹ See “The Courtships of Animals,” Pycraft.

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happiness in marriage. . . . If sexual union is a gift of God, it is worth learning how to use it. Within its own sphere it should be cultivated so as to bring physical satisfaction to both, not merely to one. . . . Reciprocity in sex love is the physical counterpart of sympathy. More marriages fail from inadequate and clumsy sex love than from too much sex love.”¹

These wise words of an experienced physician should be heeded by all married people who, as Lord Dawson says, realize that “sex love without passion is a poor, lifeless thing.” Unfortunately, the term “passion” is, in the minds of many persons, merely a synonym for sensuality or licence. This is not the place for a lengthy discourse upon the difference between sensual gratification, divorced from high sentiment and tender feeling, and pure passionate love. Instances of the former type of lasciviousness abound in modern civilized communities. The instances of passionate connubial love must, on the authority of many observers, be computed as almost rare.

Sexual idiosyncrasy varies more frequently among women than among men. Female fastidiousness plays an important part in love selection, and is often evidence of an unconscious seeking for the right paternal type. Sex frigidity is partly an exaggeration of innate feminine modesty, and this feeling can be readily intensified by an undiscerning husband. A woman may shudder with horror at the approach

¹ “Love—Marriage—Birth-Control,” pamphlet.

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of her spouse, and in nine such instances in ten the man will be unable to understand the cause. What is more, he will not take pains to discover it, but will suffer a sense of injury, disappointment, and probably resentment throughout the whole of his married life.

So utterly at variance with the beautiful simplicity of Nature are the ideas of the average man upon sex love that he will regard all exercise of the important play instinct in wedlock as something improper, licentious, or vicious.¹ He will even aim at being indifferent to "sentimentalism and nonsense" after marriage; he will strive to be perfunctory, and will imagine that he is guarding his soul by a direct defiance of natural law. And often he will wonder why his wife is cold, why she has developed "nerves" and the nagging habit, and why she weeps alone at times.

The general idea being that affection is reciprocal, one would infer that the average person believes that sexual congress should be reciprocal. There are, however, persons of mature years and some experience of life who think that only wanton or pathological women enjoy the love embrace, while others actually deny that a "good" or a "nice" woman is capable of ardour in coitus.

¹ See Maurice Parmelee, "Personality and Conduct"; Havelock Ellis, "The Play Function of Sex" in "Little Essays of Love and Virtue"; and A. Ludovici, "Man: an Indictment."

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A married woman known to me was told by her first husband, on the wedding-night, that the sex act was for the enjoyment and health of the male sex alone, and that it was her wifely duty to contribute to this exclusive masculine hygienic privilege. There is reason to believe that this ridiculous fable is credited by a considerable number of men and women. I have frequently heard it repeated. A young husband told me that he would have been surprised and shocked if he had seen signs of amorous desire in his wife on the bridal night.

Often a well-meaning, uninstructed pair marry after making a set of strict rules concerning the infrequency of intercourse, "control," and occupying separate sleeping rooms. If they are both subnormal sexually, the marriage may be mutually satisfactory. If they are normal or supernormal, there is every probability that they will suffer from bad temper, and quarrel frequently. In wedlock on this formal plan disaster threatens if one of the two is powerfully sexed.

Any writer on this subject who ventures to point out that marriage means physical union incurs a risk of being charged with inciting to over-indulgence, unless he constantly insists upon the need for restraining desire. I will repeat the reply of Lord Dawson to such critics: "Passion is a worthy possession; most men, who are any good, are capable of passion." Uncurbed lust is not on the same plane as idealized passionate love.

Every gynæcologist of experience, and many

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general practitioners, know that women often suffer acutely in marriage through the sexual ignorance of the dominant partner. But unless a woman is sufficiently intelligent to relate the whole conditions of her conjugal life, the doctor may not be able to offer sound counsel to the husband. Frigidity of the psychic type is often a great enigma and trial to a normally affectionate woman. She may imagine that she is organically defective, when the real cause of her apathy is to be sought in the maladroitness of her husband.

The ordinary or classic position in the sex act is regarded by many persons as correct and normal. It is, however, by no means universal among primitive or civilized people, and variants may make a very considerable difference in cases of female frigidity.

It is necessary to repeat that, in many women, sexual desire is almost absent, or dormant, during certain periods in a twelvemonth, and at certain stages of life. In this matter there is a great difference among women. The maximum of inclination may be apparent for a few days every month, or fortnight, and during menstruation; and desire may slumber during intervening spells. To enforce coitus when a wife is not in a naturally receptive state is the way to engender frigidity, and many men who complain of the irresponsiveness of their wives have only themselves to blame. It should be known also that young wives often fail to experience pleasure during the first weeks or months of matrimony. It is often a slow

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process of the adaptation of hitherto unused organs to entirely new functions before satisfactory reciprocal conjugal relations are established.¹ Coarse and bungling methods during this critical period of married life may cause severe psychic coldness.

The orgasm, or climax, of the sex union is usually reached more rapidly by the man than the woman, and this question of tempo is one of immense significance in marital life. Disregard of this difference in the two sexes is one of the commonest causes of conjugal discord. Many thousands of married women would be able to testify that their acquired indifference to intercourse arose through the abruptness of the act, and the seeming inability of the husband to prolong it. It is this inequality that induces anxiety neurosis in a large number of women, whose ailment is often described as neurasthenia. They develop several physical and mental symptoms, general malaise, discontent with marriage, a weariness of life, and insomnia, and are apprehensive of impending trouble. This continued arousing of desire, invariably succeeded by frustration and irritation, gradually reduces a wife to a condition of hyper-affectability and nervous sensibility. She may become the subject of chronic frigidity, or be transformed into a querulous and complaining woman, whose constant ill-temper reacts upon her husband and children.

Worry, which has been called the disease of the age

¹ This is very frequently a source of bewilderment and disappointment to both partners.

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in which we live, is often attributed to any other cause than an unsatisfactory sexual life. Sexphobia inhibits accuracy in this matter. Even a doctor who suspects the true cause of an attack of mental depression will hesitate before expressing his conjecture, and the patient will imagine that over-work, monetary difficulties, or the monotony of domestic tasks is the source of her ill-health.

Undoubtedly, worry has other origins than unsatisfactory sex relations; but indifferent health is an acknowledged cause of mental depression, and various morbid symptoms are likely to develop when the hygiene of marriage is faulty. Ages ago, in the civilized nations of the East, wise monitors pointed out, in their exhortations to husbands, that married felicity depends to a great extent upon the comprehension of the physiological and psychic fact that orgasm is slower in woman than in man. Husbands are repeatedly enjoined to practise that degree of restraint that will ensure gratification for their wives. Such advice is very rarely offered to young husbands in Europe or America. The result is that the least instinctive of modern human beings are also the least instructed in marital love. There is indeed justification for A. Ludovici's view that men of the West are sexually degenerate.

In the Orient a husband has pride in the reflection that he is able to please his wife in this love act. In the Occident the main idea of the husband is to gratify himself. This neglect of the fundamentals of

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healthy and happy wedlock is one of the principal causes of dissatisfaction with life itself, which is quite as prevalent among the well-to-do classes as among the struggling and the indigent. Indeed, the upper orders of society and the educated appear to be the least successful in marriage, and the most prone to suffer from the tedium of living.

The arrogant ignorance of men and the approved prudery of women militate continually against satisfactory wedlock. Very many marriages are never rightly consummated. Apart from the "legion of frigides," there is a host of normal, ardent women who, throughout the whole of married life, never experience the beneficent effect of the conjugal embrace. If a questionnaire on this subject could be undertaken, I am inclined to think that we would have to credit the assertion of some inquirers that at least eighty per cent. of wives suffer more or less deprivation and disappointment. This is unquestionably the true explanation of many unhappy marriages.

As I have said, psychic sexual coldness in some women can be traced to inveterate deceitfulness in their husbands. A man who lies habitually will estrange his wife sooner or later. Intense egotism, a boastful manner, disregard for domestic order and tidiness, meanness in money matters, and other faults and foibles may cause a revolt from marital intimacies. With waning respect there is often a lessening of affection, and the wife who cannot give herself

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freely without love will frequently display apathy towards the physical union.

Boredom is the bane of marriage, and it is often less tolerable than actual causes of offence. The insufferable male bore is generally a well-intentioned person, who is entirely unconscious of the fact that he continually sets his partner's nerves on edge. Women of the gentle, self-sacrificing type often suffer acute secret misery in daily association with boring husbands, and the irritation engendered may develop into frigidity.

The neglect of wives is extremely common after a few years, or less, of conjugality. The husband reverts to his bachelor ways. He spends most of his leisure at his club, or in the enjoyment of recreations which his wife cannot share. He is often dull and taciturn in the home. The wife smarts from a sense of neglect. She craves companionship; she needs sympathetic communion and heart-to-heart talks.

The day will come when the wife of the absentee or uncompanionable husband will reproach him, maybe with extreme bitterness, when he makes sexual advances. She will tell him that he only esteems her as "a sexual instrument," that he has never loved her, that he only married her for "that," and much more of a reproachful character. And the husband will consider himself a much misunderstood and injured man.

The retort of the offending spouse in such cases

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is that he provides the home, toils to obtain comfort and luxury for the family, and leads a good honest life. He may, in the words of Browning, ask himself: "Wanting—is what?" And in most cases he fails to find an answer.

An affectionate wife who is excluded from her husband's interests, amusements, or hobbies will in most instances grow apathetic towards hymeneal rites. She will comply with indifference or distaste; for the reflection that her husband only needs her for sexual satisfaction will act as poison to love and reciprocal tender feeling.

As Professors Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson remark, we are still uninformed in the psychology of woman,¹ and it may be added that woman herself is not always helpful in an investigation of her emotions and desires. It is a not uncommon complaint of husbands that they are unable to elicit frank views from their wives upon their personal needs in physical marital intercourse. A man lacking in divination, intuition, and sympathy may therefore commit many errors unwittingly.

Many women, probably the majority, regard men as big boys, impulsive, lovable creatures, but lacking oddly in insight, understanding, and unselfishness.² Olive Schreiner forecasted that in the future women will lead in the sex relation, and several modern women writers advocate matriarchal rule, on

¹ "Sex," Vol. Home University Library.

² Introduction to "Women and Labour,"

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the plea that men have shown themselves incompetent as heads of the family.

The feminine view that men are stupid in their preconceived and conventional ideas upon women is not infrequently correct. As Ludovici states, the Englishman is rarely interested in "problems of human character and motivation. He hardly understands his own sex, and cannot therefore be expected to understand his wife's." Ludovici says shrewdly that the want of respect for man shown by woman is due to the man's lack of understanding of the hidden motivation of woman. And Balzac said long ago that, in the delicate art of love, most men are no better than apes trying to play the violin.

We are forced to the conclusion that many alleged causes of sexual apathy or frigidity in women are traceable to man's ignorance of feminine psychology. The average man does not think it worth his while to study the nature of woman. He is completely content with his little stock of conventional fallacies, fantasies, superstitions and conjectures. He will take great pains in learning how to treat and drive a motor-car. He will discuss cars and motoring with experienced acquaintances, and read hand-books on the topic.

The man who aims at thoroughness in his knowledge of automobiles may give no heed whatever to the psychology of woman. He will even deride and scorn the man who believes that intellectual preparation for the responsibilities of wedded

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life and parentage is essential. He "leaves it to Nature"! It is apparently a matter of indifference to him that his lack of a little anatomical information may cause terrible suffering in the woman he has vowed to cherish. He lightheartedly disregards the peril of dysgenic procreation and the ills that may blast the lives of his offspring.

In love the rôle of the man is, in a high degree, that of teacher, and the part of woman that of pupil. Modern civilization has increased enormously man's supremacy in sex relations by fostering in every possible way woman's ignorance. But the average Western man makes no endeavour to qualify for this fateful supremacy. Urged by passion, or primal sex appetite, he scouts knowledge of the soul and body of the object of his desire. Often he is utterly incompetent, through ignorance, in the performance of the reproductive act. He may inflict torture and disease upon his wife by enforcing too frequent conception and pregnancy, or implanting in her the germs of a latent venereal affection.

CHAPTER X

SEX DIFFERENCES IN MEN AND WOMEN

WITH the advance of civilization problems of sex become highly complicated, and there is a constant tendency to divergence from the normal desires and purely instinctive conduct in the love-life. Moral and religious inhibitions, which are necessary for the control of the most potent of human impulses, are founded for the protection of society; but undue emotional repression may in many cases react detrimentally upon the individual and the race. We can only hope to establish a workable moral code in sex behaviour by a preliminary study of the facts of the sexual instinct, its evolution, manifestations, and relation to society.

The statement of Lord Dawson of Penn that the public need instruction in the scientific bearings of sex is a first principle of sociology. Professor Julian S. Huxley has said lately that "we are beginning to understand the principles underlying the important facts of biology, beginning to see how, through understanding, we may arrive at the control which will make us more masters of our fate than slaves of unknown power."

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Professor Huxley adds that the great taboo on sex knowledge has given rise to much misapprehension, and that "it is not good that a subject of such overwhelming importance alike for the individual and for the race should be taboo."¹

Sexual anæsthesia, as I have pointed out in preceding pages, is a sociological and moral question, and an inquiry into its causes, prevalence, and prevention involves an examination of many phenomena of sex. The new humanism will be based on scientific data, not on fantasy and presuppositions. Affirmation demands inquiry. We have for too long affirmed without knowledge of the manifold facts of life.

The generalizations of men concerning women, and of women concerning men, especially in relation to sexual manifestations, are mostly haphazard surmises, or one-sided views resulting from sex bias. It is necessary here to indicate some of the main sex differences between the male and the female, with the object of showing that false conceptions in the minds of both men and women give rise to the frequent disorder of frigidity.

If we examine the minute ovum, or life germ; of a woman under the microscope, we shall note that it is inactive. The spermatozoon, or fertilizing seed of a male of any species of mammal, is entirely different in its behaviour. This intensely mobile

¹ Professor J. S. Huxley's Preface to "Sex in Man and Animals," John R. Baker, 1926.

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germ-cell, armed with a whip-like tail, is a physical symbol of the psychic-sexual activity of the male sex in man or animals. The gonad, or sex cell, of the woman, by its relative passivity, symbolizes the relative psychic-sexual passivity of the female sex in the human species and in animals.

We see by this contrast in the behaviour of two infinitely tiny germs of humanity an illustration of the difference in behaviour between man and woman in courtship and sexual union. The ovum waits, the spermatozoon seeks it with enormous activity. Male energy in love is determined by the constant production of incalculable millions of spermatozoa in the testicles, and the secretion of the interstitial gland.

Quite independently of the will of man, the accumulation of seminal fluid, and the secretions of other glands, cause sexual excitement or erethism. This arousing of erotic feeling is reflex and is uncontrolled by the will.

Another and more frequent cause of sex erethism in the man is psychic or imaginative, and it may be aroused by various stimuli at any hour during the term of potency from puberty to the early stage of senility. A third mode of excitation is through deliberate stimulation of the sex organs.¹

Throughout the years of sex vigour, the most chaste, moral, and ascetic of men are liable to experience spontaneous sexual desire. Hyperorchidiacs, or men with extremely actively-functioning

¹ See Vecki, "Sexual Impotence,"

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sex glands, are naturally more susceptible to excitement and desire than under-sexed or hypo-orchidiac types. The intensity or the slightness of the struggle for chastity and continence depends fundamentally upon the lavish or the meagre secretion of ductless and other glands. When we realize that Nature is prodigal in her supply of the germs of life, and that countless myriads of male sperms are wasted for every one that finds a single mature ovum—that sex hormones are mingling constantly with the bloodstream, and arousing impulse—that erotic stimuli of a psychic character, from art to the odour of certain flowers are incessantly prompting the sex urge to action, we are the better able to realize how severe is the moral and social task of repression for those persons who are endowed with powerful amorous energy.

To teach, as some attempt to do, that restraint of the sex desire is as easy for a young man as it is for his sister, is to deny plain physiological fact. It is a common view among women that men are more “sensual” than themselves, more inflammable, and less restrained; and in a broad sense they are right. If it were otherwise, a vast number of ova would never be fertilized by the male, and there would be less need to practise birth-control. By natural decree, and not through innate sinfulness, as I have already stated, virile men are at almost any time ready to perform the procreative duty.

Women who tend to show symptoms of sexual

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apathy, because they are repelled by what they consider to be the excessive concupiscence of man, should endeavour to understand the physiology and psychology of sexual processes in the male, before reproaching men for their alleged intemperance in intercourse.

I have alluded to the passivity of the ovum as typical of the psychic passivity of woman. But it must not be supposed that at all times and universally female animals take no active part in courtship. There are certain exceptions that prove the general rule. For example, the hens of grebes and herons are by no means passive in the play of wooing. Among insects, and in some species of fish, the female is bigger and stronger than the male, and more combative.

The females of the fox, dog, and some other animals undoubtedly display a degree of coquetry or coyness when approached sexually by the male. But during the season of heat, or rut, most females among animals quest for mates, and their preliminary exhibition of semi-resistance to coitus is a biological plan for exciting the copulatory organs to tumescence, or the vascular congestion, essential for the procreative act. Darwin held that the mock resistance of the female also increases the capacity for tumescence in the male.

In the female of the human species erotic activity is evidenced very clearly by personal display, attractive colours, all kinds of adornment of the body,

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the use of cosmetics and powders, the exposure of the upper part of the bosom, as in evening dress, and in a large variety of allurements. The passivity of women in courtship, as in mating, is in reality only apparent. "An intense energy," as Ellis points out, "lies behind such passivity, an absorbed preoccupation in the end to be attained." Woman's passivity is, therefore, to a large extent a deliberate intention to allure and arouse man.

This impulse is so strong that we may readily discern it even in the instance of the frigid woman, who is often a past-mistress of coquetry. In the case of normally ardent women, passivity changes very rapidly into activity when the object of her love choice is cold, dull, or unskilled in wooing. In New Guinea women are the active wooers. Westermarck and other anthropologists give several instances of aggressive love-making by women among primitive people.¹ Among civilized women innumerable artifices are used to incite men to love.

The chief difference in the sexual susceptibility of men and women is that women as a rule do not reach the state of tumescence so quickly as men. When that condition is aroused by the skilful wooing of an admired man, woman will respond with equal ardour. Sexual frigidity in woman is, therefore, in a large proportion of instances, the result of the partner's incapacity in the art of love. A wife who is frequently disappointed through her husband's

¹ "History of Human Marriage."

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disregard of her need for preliminary tender caresses, and the abruptness of the sex act, is likely to develop apathy or positive coldness.

A fairly common cause for matrimonial disharmony is to be found in the existence of *ejaculatio præcox* in the husband. This disorder is common in men of a highly excitable nature, who may have an orgasm and emission before their wives are even fully aroused. Premature ejaculation is a phenomenon of considerable psychic importance, and it is probably the result of an unconscious complex. It is apt to occur when intercourse is infrequent, and is common among men who are separated from their wives for long periods, or among those who practise undue restraint in conjugal life.

Precipitate ejaculation must be classed as morbid and pathological, as it is directly contrary to the natural scheme in copulation. Vecki suggests that sterility in some women may be traced to this deficiency in the husband, orgasm being generally a condition essential to conception.¹ There is no doubt that a number of married women become indifferent to the embraces of husbands afflicted by this abnormality.

Neurasthenics and other neurotic subjects are often sufferers from *ejaculatio præcox*. Even normal men of strong virility may, at the outset of wedlock, experience premature emission, through acute excitement combined with solicitude for the right

¹ "Sexual Impotence."

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performance of intercourse. The phenomenon is likely to occur in the case of highly-strung, imaginative, and ardent men, either at the beginning of marital relations, or throughout the whole conjugal life.

A very high degree of restraint upon psychic feeling is often necessary for the man who wishes that his wife shall participate naturally and reciprocally in the sexual union. The strain upon the nervous system, especially where there is a tendency to neurosis, is often extremely severe. This is one of the secret trials of both husband and wife in an enormous number of cases. Not only one partner is concerned. Both are exposed to the risk of developing a vague and apparently inscrutable mental depression, which may become pathological. I believe that anxiety-neurosis in both sexes may be traced, in some examples of this common malady, to the premature ejaculation of the husband.

This derangement of sexual function needs a more extensive study by scientific physicians and psychotherapists. Its causation is probably psychic in very many persons, but it may be traced in others to organic defect. Erotic day-dreaming, preceding coitus, may induce the disorder, and masturbation has been cited as one of the causes. Transitory incapacity to accomplish the sexual act may occur among perfectly potent men, and temporary frigidity may be noted in ardent women.

There are many psychic factors that may hinder

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the healthy accomplishment of the act of coitus, constantly or recurrently. I have known cases in which the symptoms of a slight chronic cold in the head in the partner, the habit of sniffing, or some other source of disgust have rendered a husband or a wife incapable of response in intercourse. An unpleasant body odour in a husband may repel his wife from conjugal intimacies. It is well established that the nerves of the nose are an erogenous zone, in close connection with the genital apparatus.

Undoubtedly the tendency to experience disgust is very strong, and often exaggerated, among women. Nothing is more fatal to romance than disgust. Many wives are pseudo-frigides through the personal uncleanliness of their husbands. These repulsions may not be felt at the beginning of matrimony, but they are apt to be manifested when the first glamour is fading. Women are generally more careful than men in avoiding causes of evoking disgust in other persons.

Domestic quarrels may happen now and again between a happily married pair without causing a loss of affection; but perpetual bickering may cause sexual coldness of an incurable character. Some women are acutely irritable during the monthly period, and in the pre-climacteric stage, after the age of forty. The woman who desires that wedded life shall be a state of mutual comfort and consolation will endeavour to check the tendency to nag, or to express cynical views upon men in general, when

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entering these trying periods. She may be sure that her husband, if he is not a dullard or arch-egoist, will note her restraint with gratitude and love.

After a matrimonial falling-out, a naturally warm-natured woman may require some time to regain a tranquil poise, and to revive her tenderness. At such a time many women feel a temporary sense of disunion, and any amorous advances from the husband may be completely distasteful. On the other hand, in some cases "the night will hallow the day" for the pair who have confessed their hastiness of temper, and made atonement.

"Enjoyments not shared are in sexualibus less than half-pleasures," writes Dr. Victor Vecki. The sharing of the spiritual and physical raptures of married love depends not only on the existence of passion, but upon an understanding of the differences between the pair in the expression of passion, bodily and psychically.

Intellectuality in women has been long feared by men, chiefly through the unconscious or semi-conscious dread that exercise of the brain desexualizes a woman, or is calculated to produce anti-man prejudices and sexual anæsthesia. This is a common bogey of the masculine mind.

Intellectual women are as a class more imaginative, romantic, poetical and amative than their less cultured sisters. It is true that certain kinds of brain-work, such as scientific research, use up a large amount of nervous energy, and diminish sexual vigour. But

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comparatively few women are scientists; the majority of intellectually-disposed women are of the artistic and imaginative type. Nevertheless, very close mental concentration, if continual, is likely to weaken sex desire in men or women. A too sedentary life, even if the brain is not overtaxed, will also tend to sexual enfeeblement.

If a man marries a stout, lymphatic, blonde woman, full-breasted, and of the Rubens type, he may be surprised to discover that she is not passionate in love. Generally speaking, fat persons of either sex are somewhat subnormal sexually. They are often of the alimentative order, and not amorists by nature. Hearty feeders often possess sex vigour; but according to Vecki, when their bodies become gross through over-eating and drinking, they are in the state of obesity that "grows from day to day more hostile to Venus."

The typical ardent woman of art, poetry, and fiction is rarely fat, though when represented by a painter she may be of the Venus model. Thinness in woman has long been associated with ardour in love. Stekel regards a great preoccupation with the pleasure of eating as one of the substitutes for sexual deprivation.¹ I have noted that both men and women who are deprived of the joys of love often tend to alcoholic intemperance. Husbands of frigid wives are very frequently heavy drinkers.

In a thoughtful paper, Mrs. S. S. Brierley has

¹ "Disguises of Love."

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discussed some of the causes of sex-antagonism, sex-phobia, and sexual anæsthesia in women.¹ Mrs. Brierley refers to "a relative sexual inertia" in women, "a passive waiting for stimulation by the active approach of the male." This passivity and reticence upon sex desires may become so exaggerated that "it may even reach to an entire unawareness of sexual desire and an entire ignorance of the facts of intercourse and reproduction, in otherwise highly informed women."

That feelings of shame for sex, and disgust with the organs of copulation and excretion, are associated deeply with the "castration complex" in women is a view reiterated by Mrs. Brierley. I have already alluded to the psycho-analytic theory that an immense number of women are dominated unconsciously by an infantile fantasy that they have suffered forcible deprivation of the characteristic male organs. This sense of inferiority is likely to become a mental wound, and is a determinant of hostility to the male, of frigidity, and mental resistance to anything appertaining to sex.

It is the view of Mrs. Brierley that elements of this complex are in the unconscious mind of all women, though they are not necessarily productive of morbid ideas upon sex. But "they undoubtedly play a large part in the genesis of that state of total repres-

¹ "A Note on Sex Differences, from a Psycho-Analytic Point of View," *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Part IV, Vol. III, 1923.

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sion of sex interest and sex knowledge in highly educated women, where there is present a strongly marked ego development with a complete repudiation of even the existence of sexual facts."

Narcissism (self-love, self-esteem, extreme admiration of one's own body and personality) is a very common human trait. In women this high regard for the ego is more marked than in men, and it is shown by the tendency to exhibitionism in dress and the use of artificial aids to beauty. The self-esteem of the Narcissistic woman causes her to act exactingly and imperiously towards her lover, husband, or children. She may be apparently apathetic in her marital relations, through the unconscious, or fully-conscious, thought that no man is worthy to embrace such a divinity in human form.

Beautiful women of this class are frequently cold in love. They are much sought by would-be suitors, and constantly complimented and flattered, with the result that their sense of self-importance often becomes grotesquely exaggerated. The triumphant belle, with her train of admirers, may become an intolerably tyrannical wife, self-centred, selfish in conduct, and sexually cold. Narcissism in women is stimulated and encouraged by the homage that men pay to woman's physical loveliness.

The plain woman may also exhibit Narcissistic qualities, through self-admiration for her capability, intellectual or artistic attainments, or her "virtue" and "purity." This intense self-love inhibits the

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Narcissist from giving himself or herself freely in physical union. Such women consider themselves "too good for human nature's daily food." They are miserly in the offering of "favours" to their spouses.

This over-estimation of the self is fostered in young women, whose mothers, or female friends, utter warnings against the danger of making themselves "too cheap," or "too easily won" by lovers. Behind the Narcissism is often a semi-submerged hatred of men, which is expressed either in crude or subtle ways, e.g., cynicism, snubbing, nagging, exactingness.

Love is the source of altruism, and the tender, unselfish type of lover, in either sex, experiences joy and pride in giving himself or herself. The Narcissist is nearer to the primitive sexual level. She seeks first and foremost the gratification of her egotism. Her husband is an appendage, not an equal partner.

I have tried to show that normal sexual development in women is usually more complicated and difficult of adjustment than in men, and that the causes producing apparent or true sexual apathy and coldness among women are biological and physiological, as well as psychic and social. Instinctively, the awareness of the necessity for restraint is more powerful in woman than in man; for copulation, with its probability of conception and pregnancy, must inevitably have a far deeper import for the female than the male.

The tendency to sublimation of the sex impulse is

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more marked in women than in men, partly through the excessive social repressions demanded from women. Unfortunately, the efforts towards undue repression often fail to find the right channel of interest and activity, and the end is not sublimation, but neurotic disturbance or sex coldness.

So powerful is the desire among the mass of Western and Northern women to annihilate or repudiate any interest in sexuality that the wonder is that frigidity is not more prevalent. My greatly-admired friend, the late Dr. James Glover, wrote that there are a number of persons "who would assert (truthfully as far as consciousness is concerned) that they have never experienced any sexual desire whatsoever, and who would assert with every show of justification that, in the opinion of themselves and their acquaintances, they were normal individuals, regarding the absence of sexual desire as a cultural achievement, which in one sense it is."

More especially is the anxiety to repudiate sex accentuated among women. Concerning a questionnaire on the subject of normal sexuality, Dr. Glover said that a large number of women, "educated according to a certain cultural pattern," would deny strenuously any interest in such matters. Undoubtedly, cultural influences may bring about in some women an apparent complete disappearance of the sexual instinct.¹

¹ "The Conception of Sexuality," *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. V, Part III, 1925.

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Apart from positive and pseudo-frigidity, a large proportion of women are sexually subnormal, as compared with men. Continence for such women is not a severe trial, and they have scanty sympathy towards men and women who have difficulty in restraining impulse. In some instances of subnormality there is a marked insensibility of the external generative organs, a condition occasionally noted by gynæcologists. This physiological state has its psychic reactions, which colour the views upon love and sex, and tend to foster a sense of virtuous superiority in the capacity for restraint.

The economic aspect of marriage has a bearing upon the question of sex frigidity in women. Men in the majority marry for love. This is not saying that "love" for all men connotes a romantic, spiritualized, adoring affection for a woman. The desire for possession and bodily oneness is, however, the dominating force when a man woos a woman with an intent to make her his mate.¹

¹ Rousseau maintained that "Women are a hundred times sooner reasonable than passionate; they are as unable to describe love as to feel it." H. T. Finck states: "The average woman knows little of Romantic Love. . . . Women are not only less capable of deep love than men, but they do not even promote the growth and survival of love by favouring the man most deeply affected by it. . . . Were women the paragons of subtle insight they are painted, they would favour those who are most visibly affected by their charms, as being the best able to appreciate and cherish

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Now, it must be said that this consciousness of sensuous longing is predominant in the thought of the inexperienced girl of the civilized communities. A great number of unmarried young women are, no doubt, sentimental in their view of love and marriage; but they are in the larval stage of female development, and partly, or wholly, unconscious of the nature and the force of their latent impulses. There is always the risk that an immature woman may marry for almost any other reason than overwhelming ardour of affection.

It has been said that a man can never be entirely assured that a woman's consent to marry him is a certain proof of devotion. If we read the replies of girls to questions often published in periodicals, upon ideal marriage, the desirable type of husband, and other love and wedlock topics, we shall observe that the average maiden's idea of matrimony is largely practical, material, and business-like. There will be noted many references to the possible suitor's aptitude in making his way in the world, which is undoubtedly an important requisite for "the protector of the brood."

Elsewhere I have stated views on the economic them."* Lord Byron warns the lover of women against being too humble in courtship, or she will despise his very tenderness.

* "Romantic Love and Personal Beauty." 2 vols.

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factor in married life.¹ I will say merely in this place that the economic structure of society, and the monetary dependence of woman upon man during the whole or part of her life, causes many hindrances to a natural, free, purely passional love-choice. Women themselves admit this factor of inhibition upon absolutely instinctive and emotional sexual selection in their sex.²

It is not impossible that the unsophisticated girl, who marries with a minimum of ardent feeling towards her lover—but whose paramount appraisal of matrimony is as a means of escape from uncongenial work, an unhappy home, poverty, deprivation of liberty, or any other reason—may in the intimacy of marital life develop a reciprocal warmth of feeling.

It is, however, very probable that the woman who marries with half-hearted affection, or with the idea that “calm friendship” offers more consolation than passionate sex love, may find herself confronted with the problem of erotic apathy, or complete aversion from sexual intercourse with her chosen partner. And the discovery of his wife’s maladaptation to conjugal union may prove one of the most poignant trials of the husband’s life.

It is, to say the least, highly probable that a

¹ “Pitfalls of Marriage.”

² “Women and Labour,” “Women and Economics,” Charlotte P. Gilman. The question is discussed by Ellen Key in “Love and Marriage,” Olive Schreiner in “Women and Labour,” and Mrs. Havelock Ellis, “The New Horizon in Love and Life.”

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marriage without love on both sides will result in the sexual coldness of one or both of the pair. This is not saying that fervent, romantic lovers invariably attain the highest degree of felicity in wedlock. The chances of happiness are, however, greatly jeopardized when love is a secondary consideration in the choice of a spouse.

It is the view of Olive Schreiner that "parasitism" in woman arises when the females of the dominant class or race are supported entirely by the work of men, or of women of a less fortunate status. We see then the idle woman, "the effete wife, concubine, or prostitute, clad in fine raiment, the work of others' fingers, fed on luxurious viands, the result of others' toil." Olive Schreiner describes "the fine lady, the human female parasite," as "the most deadly microbe which can make its appearance on the surface of any social organism."

The specific forms of psychic anæsthesia so common in women can be traced frequently to a vulgar evaluation of love and marriage, which precludes passion-love in its finest manifestations of spirit and body. "Love should never have a money value," writes Mrs. Havelock Ellis. Every question of ways and means, of the furnishing and decoration of the home, and material matters are discussed by the average betrothed couple in all classes. The more vital questions of the nature of love in the two sexes and the mutual adaptability of the pair in what is generally for the woman a new revelation of her own

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soul and that of her husband, are not discussed as they should be, sanely and candidly.

“In the unwedded girl’s idealized love-world nothing is even sanely virile,” said Mrs. Ellis. “What we need as a first step is absolute sincerity between a man and a woman before a legal contract is signed.”

The æsthetic and poetic sense in the average woman is far less developed than is generally believed. Few women feel a truly passionate love for the beauties of natural scenery. Even in the matter of dress and personal adornment, which is of supreme importance in the lives of a vast number of women, one may note that the expert costume designer of wide repute is seldom a woman.

Very few women have excelled in poetry and the arts, except in acting. It is difficult to recall the name of a woman highly distinguished as a painter of the human form, or of a really eminent female sculptor. Only a comparative minority of women have an æsthetic admiration for the male human body, whereas the great majority of men are fascinated by the female form, not only in the erotic sense, but æsthetically.

Artistic perception of the beauty of the human shape is a mark of a late and high development in culture, which has grown from the primitive instinct to select an attractive mate. Uneducated women are singularly indifferent to the beauty of the nude male body. There are many women who consider the

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unclothed human figure as ugly. One of my housekeepers, pointing to some photographs of classic statuary in my study, said: "I can't tell what you can see in those ugly pictures!" A young woman, above the average in intelligence, remarked to me: "I think a naked man is a revolting sight!"

The feeling of shame at the spectacle of nudity is usually stronger in women than in men, but it is well marked in both sexes. This attitude is derived from the ascetic religious tradition that "the flesh" is evil and the body impure. Havelock Ellis shows how unwholesome, and in essence gross and licentious, is this recoil from the human body freed from the trappings of conventional clothing. He speaks of the "ferocity" shown by white missionaries, all over the world, in compelling savages to wear European dress.¹

This horror of nakedness is unquestionably a determinant of sexual frigidity in a great many women of the West. Partial, suggestive nudity is sanctioned, even encouraged in young women. Nevertheless, this conventional custom, as instanced in the wearing of evening dress, does not foster a true æsthetic evaluation of the body. It is merely a fashion, an accepted tradition of society.

Stratz remarks that "the clothed man sees in the uncovered body only a sensual irritation." But at the highest standpoint man consciously returns to

¹ "Sex in Relation to Society," Chapter on "Sexual Education and Nakedness."

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Nature, and recognizes that under the manifold coverings of human fabrication there is hidden the most splendid creature that God has created.”¹ Thoreau observed shrewdly: “As yet we have not seen man in Nature.”

The revolt from the body is thoroughly morbid. St. Athanasius and St. Clement reproved their disciples for prudishness in this matter. The entire relationship of the sexes is threatened by the inculcated notion of the shamefulness of the “handiwork of God” as He created it. Revulsion from the body is revulsion from love itself.

Many disasters in marriage would be prevented if girls were trained to æsthetic and hygienic respect for the body.

The question of the relative strength of the sex impulse in men and women has been long discussed by numerous medical and lay writers. Fifty years ago, when Acton’s volume on the reproductive organs was considered classical, doubt existed concerning the force of sex instinct in women, and there were medical writers who even denied that women possess sex sensibility.

An entirely opposite view was stated by such an experienced physician as Matthews Duncan. The question is entangled in a mass of generalizations, surmises, suppositions, and prejudices, and the alleged data is often too scanty to be regarded as conclusive. The reticence of the average woman in regard to this

¹ “Die Frauenkleidung.”

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matter is often so close that a fair proportion of married men know extremely little concerning the psycho-sexual nature of their wives.

Thoughtful and candid women have, however, in recent years contributed personal views to this discussion. Several women of normal sex development have told me that deprivation from intercourse is intolerable when protracted, and they are of the opinion that most women, if honest, would make the same admission. I have been consulted by widows and women separated for one cause or another from their husbands, who suffered mentally and physically from sexual abstinence. I have noted cases of unhappiness, acute depression, menstrual irregularity, drug-taking, alcoholism, and perversion arising in women who lead strictly celibate lives, or among those married to apathetic, absentee, or frigid husbands.

A working woman of sixty came, in tears, to consult one of my medical friends. She said that she had been married for three months to a second husband, who had not once embraced her.

CHAPTER XI

FRIGIDITY IN MEN

SEXUAL anæsthesia is less commonly observed among men than women. There are in both sexes degrees of limited sexual desire which cannot be classed as positive frigidity. Congenital organic anæsthesia exists in a proportion of men, and Effertz estimates the frequency at one per cent.¹ Psychic frigidity is more prevalent in men than the organic type. From my inquiries, I am disposed to estimate the frequency of the mental form of anæsthesia in men as nearer five than one per cent.

Sexual frigidity in a man, whether physical or psychic in origin, may be the cause of diminished desire in his wife. Coldness in a wife may produce psychic sexual impotence in her husband. In a typical instance which I have noted, a normally constituted man who was married to a frigide lost the capacity for coitus. He regained potency in a second marriage, and is now a parent. Such cases are not uncommon.

¹ "Neurasthenia Sexualis."

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Sexual impotence in a man is not a sign of frigidity, for impotent persons are, as a rule, not lacking in desire. They may be potentially vigorous. Impotence of the male is not a part of the present discussion, except in its relation to the frigidity of the female, and in regard to the fact that incapacity for intercourse may accompany psychic anæsthesia in men in a proportion of cases.

Indifference to conjugation existing in the male sex may be due to defective endocrine secretion from the thyroid, pituitary, interstitial, or seminal glands. It may arise from maldevelopment of the genital organs, the loss of testicles through castration, or other injury, or from the heredity of a degenerate stock.

Sexual energy and power are inherited qualities. Krafft-Ebing, Hoffman, and other inquirers hold the view that anæsthesia in sexuality is a sign of degeneration in a family.¹ Dr. Vecki speaks of robust-looking men who are conspicuously feeble in sex capacity, and finds the type in men of very light complexion and high-pitched voices. He states that a decline of virility in the father who begets a son may handicap his son in sexualibus.²

The sexually cold and weak man is often effeminate in appearance, and to some extent in behaviour. He may be an extremely tractable husband. Such men are occasionally chosen by

¹ "Psychopathia Sexualis."

² "Sexual Impotence."

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a woman with a passion for "mothering" the opposite sex, or by the woman with a love of power and dragooning.

Incontinence of urine in childhood has been stated to be a determinant of sex debility in later life.¹ The psychic form of frigidity in men may be associated with a feeble interest in the æsthetic attraction of women, as in the case of men who never become enthusiastic in the admiration of a lovely woman's face or form, and are inclined to sneer at their acquaintances who are highly susceptible to the lure of beauty.

The frigid man is frequently very unemotional, coarse or gross in thought and speech about women. Unlike the passionate man, he cannot idealize love and women. He is superior to "all that kind of nonsense." Cold men, like disappointed and frustrated ardent men, tend to drink to excess. Their lack of interest in love reacts upon their whole outlook on life, and their judgment upon the faults and foibles of the amorous types of men and women are often exceedingly harsh or cruel.

The strongly amorous man, with his passion well controlled and sublimated, may achieve the highest in moral and social conduct, in art, commerce, or public service. But the cold, unsympathetic stranger

¹ Nocturnal enuresis, or bedwetting, is thought by the Freudian psycho-analysts to be associated with sex gratification.

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to love has no passion to sublimate into virtues. He is a species of emotional bankrupt.

The ardent woman who has the misfortune to marry a sexually frigid man is likely to develop one form or another of the psychoneuroses, unless she discovers some means of sublimating her sex energy. In any case, the marriage will be an incomplete union. Wives of cold men often suffer from depression, or anxiety-neurosis, and they are apt to become irritable or irascible, and to regret that they have married. Moroseness, surliness, and bad temper are found in both men and women of strong sexual impulses who are forced to practise an unnatural degree of continence.

Healthy and happy conjugal intercourse is undoubtedly a preservative of bodily vigour and the right functioning of the whole system. Cases of high blood pressure and premature ageing occur in both sexes when sexual life is abnormal. A happy marriage is a factor of longevity.

Sterility in a husband may induce psychic frigidity in his wife. A woman who yearns intensely for children requires much fortitude and philosophy to become resigned to barrenness. There is some reason to believe that sexual anæsthesia in the male may be associated with sterility. It has been observed that the seminal fluid of extremely continent men is occasionally quite devoid of the active germs. The same phenomenon has been noted in men who indulge in coitus to excess. In this, as in other

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questions of hygienic living, the golden mean is the true rule.

Newly ejaculated spermatozoa are exceedingly active, and in a temperature that is neither too hot nor too cold they will live for some days. Feeble spermatozoa found in the old, and in those who have practised excessive restraint or over-indulgence, do not show the remarkable activity of vigorous spermatozoa, and in many cases they are dead before ejaculation. Evidence collected by various physicians seems to prove that fertility in men is favoured by moderate and satisfactory sexual intercourse.

The strength of sex capacity varies very greatly in men, as in women. There are slightly subnormal men who are perfectly content, during the term of highest potency, with fortnightly or monthly intercourse, while in cases of positive subnormal development there may be abstention for much longer periods. We can only accept complete indifference to coitus as true abnormality or morbidity. Within the range of normality are many degrees of desire and aptitude.

One individual may be quite potent before the age of eighteen; another may not reach puberty until after the age of twenty. Senile impotence may be reached prematurely, before the age of fifty. One man may be incapable of intercourse at forty; another may be virile after seventy, and able to beget children.

A normally sexual woman married to a very old man is likely to become apathetic, unless her husband is supernormally virile. Aged men are

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aware of the risk of a young wife's becoming infatuated with another man, and are often tortured by jealousy. On the other hand, a frigid woman may be content in a marriage with a man of advanced years, who is no longer potent.

Sexually inverted men (homosexuals) are usually repelled physically by women, though they may admire the opposite sex for their intellectual or moral traits. True congenital male inverts seldom marry; but many men with minor symptoms of inverted sexuality enter matrimony. Men of this type are classed pathologically as psycho-sexual hermaphrodites. There are probably more women than men of this type.

Sex inversion is often the result of suggestion and example in early life, and the phenomenon is well known among observant school teachers. It is probably rare in co-education schools. Segregation of the sexes invariably gives rise to inverted emotion. Ellis is of the opinion that much may be done "by physical hygiene and other means to prevent the extension of homosexuality in schools." This investigator points out the obvious fact, too often ignored by parents and tutors, that absolute repression of all emotional manifestations of sex in boys and girls at puberty is impossible.¹

Homosexual impulses have been cured by Dr. von Schrenk-Notzing and other physicians, but more modern methods of treatment are hypnotism or

¹ "Sexual Inversion."

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suggestion. Cures have been claimed by practising psychologists, and it must be said that analysis has thrown a new light upon this human problem.

Of the influence of tobacco-poisoning upon the sex function I have no evidence. It has been said that constant smoking diminishes sexual capacity. A similar statement has been made on the aphrodisiac quality of strong coffee as an habitual beverage.

Sexual anæsthesia in men is a less notable phenomenon than in women. Instances of absolute male frigidity are extremely infrequent, but the psychic form of the disorder is not very uncommon. Sexual impotence in the European and American white races is said to be increasing in the male sex. This disability is, however, not to be classed as anæsthesia, because most impotent men have normal desire for intercourse.

Apparent coldness in men is due in some cases to over-severe repression of thought upon sexual matters, or "the flight from sex." A considerable number of men, more than is commonly believed, have a high ideal of chastity. So strong is the power of this idealism in some men that the term "Galahad complex" has been invented to describe the austere control exercised, and the dread of unchastity. The complex is compatible with a high degree of potential virility, and is not always a mark of sexual sub-normality.

Psychic coldness towards the opposite sex may arise in men from deficient or deranged secretion of the

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endocrine glands, notably the thyroid and interstitial. The semen-producing cells of the testicles are only a part of those organs. Between the seminal tubes are the interstitial cells, or cells of Leydig, which secrete a hormone of great importance. Steinach holds that sexual vigour and desire are derived from the interstitial glands.

It is a proved fact that the grafting of even a portion of a healthy testicle in the body of an impotent or frigid man results in an improvement in health and vigour, increased energy for work, and the desire and capacity for mating. No clearer proof could be offered of the supreme significance of the testicular secretions in the physical and psychic life of man.

As we have noted in the case of women, inverted sex emotion, or homosexuality, is also the cause of frigidity in men towards the opposite sex. Male inverts are often feminine in appearance and in habit. They may be attracted to women intellectually, but not from passion.

All the inhibitions and emotions of shame, fear, disgust, and guilt, that foster frigidity in women, may affect men, and produce a relative, or strongly marked, erotic apathy. But men being, as a sex, less inhibited than women are not so frequently subject to sex coldness.

Bloch associates frigidity in men with impotence in the majority of cases. There are nevertheless a number of sexually incapable men who show no signs of diminished amativeness. On the contrary, many

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of the disabled seek specialist advice in every capital of the Western world. Medical literature upon sexual impotence in men is fairly exhaustive, and written in several languages.

Subnormality in sexuality in men is a contributing cause of frigidity in their wives, and a not uncommon source of domestic dissension and separation. Complete impotence in the husband may preclude all chance of begetting a family, and many cases of alleged sterility in wives are the result of this incapacity for procreation.

Impotence in men has several causes. One school of medical authorities attributes the disorder to protracted masturbation, or nocturnal involuntary emissions. Other causes frequently cited are affections of the prostate gland, stricture of the urethra, gonorrhœa, hernia, sex excess, and complete abstinence.

Frigidity of a relative kind may exist in a husband who has become estranged emotionally from his wife. Cases of this mock wedlock are common in all classes of society. We know married couples who live together in apparent amity, but seldom, or never, engage in intercourse. The fault, or the misfortune, may be mutual, or the indifference may be due to the conduct of one of the pair.¹

¹ In a case known to me a husband has refrained from intercourse for six years, on the plea that sexual union is "beastly." His wife has suffered much mental depression. In another instance, a young wife is "weary of life" through the coldness of her husband.

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Many men separate from cold wives, but a much smaller proportion of women leave frigid husbands. The number who find the situation intolerable, and take steps to obtain separation or divorce, represents only a small number of sexually unsatisfied wives. The apparently mysterious cases of mental depression in married women, of insomnia, drug-taking, alcoholism, hysteria, and other neurotic disturbances are often the consequence of cohabitation with an apathetic or under-sexed spouse.

The natural course for the congenitally cold man is to marry a congenitally frigid woman. Unfortunately, in probably the majority of marriages, the contracting pair know very little of the intimate views and feelings of one another respecting the physical relationship.

As I have pointed out, much unhappiness and many ill-assorted unions result from the conventional reticence upon sex matters.¹ Hence we notice on every hand, and in all classes of the community, wedded couples who courted as strangers, and remain either strangers, or embittered antagonists, throughout married life.

Misogyny, the antipathy towards women exhibited by a proportion of men, may be a cause of sexual anæsthesia. The feeling may, however, accompany strong sexual desire, divorced from tender sentiment and respect for the partner. The philosopher Schopenhauer was a sensual woman-hater.

¹ See view of Mrs. Havelock Ellis, "The New Horizon."

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Iwan Bloch attributes misogyny to the pietistic asceticism that represented woman as the source of all sin, the witch, and the demon. He refers to a work by Jacques Olivier, published in Rouen in 1646, entitled "Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes," in which all the bad qualities of women are closely described. Strindberg affords an example of a vehement misogynist.¹

The woman-despiser should refrain from marriage. He is the counterpart of the man-hating woman, and like her, is incapable of feeling or bestowing love.

¹ "Confessions of a Fool."

CHAPTER XII

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND FRIGIDITY

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS has revealed certain hidden causes of the disorder of sexual frigidity which have hitherto baffled the medical psychologist. Freud, Abraham, Stekel, Jones, and several other investigators have shown that this aberration is of mental origin. Dr. Abraham's instructive paper, read at the Sixth International Psycho-Analytical Congress, was an exposition upon the sex resistances in women due to the infantile complex of the envy of the male.¹

This attitude certainly appears to be common in women, and some inquirers state that it is universal. The influence of this complex upon character formation is stated to be a dominating force in many women's lives, causing depreciation of men, frigidity, and various physical disorders, such as vaginismus and enuresis.

Professor Freud, at the Homburg Congress,

¹ "Ausserungs formen des Weiblichen Kastrationskomplexes."

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demonstrated from his experience as a physician that the complex under discussion fosters two types of mind in women. In one type there is a repressed wish to assume the masculine rôle, and in the other a desire to emasculate the man.

Professor Freud states: "As we learn from our psycho-analytic work all women feel that they have been injured in their infancy, and that through no fault of their own they have been slighted and robbed of a part of their body; and the bitterness of many a daughter towards her mother has as its ultimate cause the reproach that her mother has brought her into the world as a woman instead of a man."

The examples recorded by psycho-therapists of high standing undoubtedly throw a strong light upon problems of sex envy and antagonism in women. As Abraham points out, the conscious, rationalized explanation of a woman, with marked symptoms of envy of the man, is that men have a better time on this earth than women, and that they are less hindered by social proscriptions. Often the yearning to be a man is unconscious.¹

Dr. Karen Horney states that long experience as a mental physician brings conviction that the anti-man complex is very marked in a number of women. This factor "plays a leading part in every case of exaggerated embarrassment and prudery in girls. . . .

¹ "The Masculinity Complex in Women," J. H. W. Van Ophuijsen, *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. V, Part I.

Here we have probably the most fundamental basis of the revengeful attitude towards men.”¹

It would be impossible within the scope of this book to array even a part of the large amount of evidence proving that sex anæsthesia springs from the depths of the unconscious mind. The “fixation on the father” is no doubt a determinant of frigidity in women. Case histories of analysts abound with instances of this exaggerated worship of the father-image. One has only to look around among one’s own circle of acquaintances for examples of disappointed women married to men who, in the unconscious mind, stand as paternal images.

The “devoted daughter,” who is often the heroic nurse of an invalid or hypochondriac father, may in early middle age find an imaginary replica of the admired parent, and consent to become his wife. Such unions are rarely, if ever, satisfactory. The woman expects to discover paternal fondness in her spouse, and makes emotional demands that he cannot gratify. Many instances of connubial indifference in women can be traced to this longing for the father-image in a husband.

In an ideal marriage, it may be said that the woman has turned from father and mother and cleaves to her husband. This is not incompatible with the deepest

¹ “Genesis of Castration Complex in Women,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. V, Part I. See also “The Flight from Womanhood,” Karen Horney, in the same Journal, Vol. VII, Parts III-IV.

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affection for the parents. But in cases of "fixation on the parent," the bond is abnormally emotional, and there is a constant seeking for paternal or maternal tenderness, and a sense of dependence that may be almost childish.

Dr. Wilhelm Stekel, a very eminent authority upon the problems of sex frigidity, writes that "the family circle is love's training ground for civilized mankind." But he warns us that "we cannot remain for ever in the primary school of love." The petted, pampered boy or girl acquires an intense craving for tenderness, and this may prove fatal in the married relation with an unemotional or phlegmatic partner. It is certain that many fathers threaten, by overfondness and indulgence, their daughters' chances of happiness in wedlock.

Dr. Stekel's monumental work, in two large volumes, "Frigidity in Woman: In Relation to her Love-Life," is a broad scientific survey of the question, which should be in the library of every physician, psychologist, and earnest student of human problems. The cases collected from a large number of women are extremely enlightening, and the volumes are written on a sound basis of experience, with scientific accuracy, a humanistic sympathy, and a heartening philosophy.

Dr. Stekel shows how difficult it is to estimate the extent of frigidity in women. He writes: "If I confined myself to the first statements of the women patients the percentage of anæsthetic women would

be around eighty.” Whereas “very few healthy women are anæsthetic,” he states, “among the neurotics most women are so.”

An increasing number of women consult Dr. Stekel on account of sexual frigidity, and among them he finds three types: (1) The absolutely frigid woman, (2) the relatively frigid woman, and (3) the passionately frigid woman. According to this experienced investigator, the cold woman suffers from an inhibitory force, which is hidden, and expresses itself as *I will not*.

Dr. Stekel is led to believe that “an alarming number of the women of our age have lost their capacity for love. . . . Man’s inability to love is not nearly so widespread as woman’s.”

“Her sexual frigidity enables woman to domineer, to triumph over man. . . . The growth of dyspareunia in modern times, therefore, is to be interpreted as a phase in woman’s struggle for equal rights; it is distinctly a social manifestation.”

Dr. Sandor Ferenczi, of Budapest, has contributed to the discussion of sexual anæsthesia in women. He is of the opinion that disinclination for marital intercourse in men is usually the effect of the unconscious seeking for the idolized mother in the wife. Referring to the man’s responsibility for sexual apathy in his wife, he says: “The husband often adopts a wrong attitude in sexual affairs from the very first night; he feels constrained to exercise to a bride who is quite unaccustomed to these demonstrations a degree of

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masculine potency far beyond the necessities of the occasion. The result is that their erotic relations cool off even during the honeymoon; the husband becomes morose and his wife is overcome with perplexity at the course of events. This may develop into a permanent source of damage to married relations.”

CHAPTER XIII

OUR ABNORMAL LOVE-LIFE

NATURAL love between a cultured man and a woman is a complete fusion of spirit and body. This is also ideal love, and it is comparatively rare. A simple desire to relieve sexual congestion and tension is not love. True passion is born of tender feeling, sympathy, understanding, and communion. Through æons of evolution Nature seems to have had an ideal of the perfectibility of Love.

When our primitive ancestors began to assume the upright position human love began. The physical congress of man and woman began to merge from mere carnal longing into an act invested with tender emotion, and savage wooing was transformed from pursuit and capture of the female into the prototype, the crude initial stage, of romantic love.

Natural love is comparatively rare, because human love is a late or recent discovery of Nature. It is rare because civilization has proceeded too rapidly for human beings to adjust themselves to its rigorous conditions. Love in our time is a conflict between primal desires and the ideal self, the super-ego. In

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the refining process, from the days of the hairy cave-man to Robert Browning, error has been unavoidable. We have never essayed a proper understanding of love until within the immediate past. We are beginning now to speak of "the science of sexology." We are discovering that the moral, social, and individual direction of the most massive force in the universe demands a preliminary inquiry into the facts of sex and love.

There are men and women who say that they cannot fall in love. There are others who fall in love frequently. Stekel tells us that the reputed strangers to love are usually "fixated" on infantile ideals, or they prefer to deceive themselves. Readiness for love is often a vague yearning, a restlessness, a condition of expectancy, and such is the natural attitude of the boy or girl in the first stage of adolescence.

"The presence in our midst of so many persons who have lost the capacity to love is one of the signs of an unhealthy age."¹ I have met men who say that they require sexual intercourse for their health's sake, but who add: "I have never been in love. I don't know what it means." Such freaks of humanity need, as Stekel says, "a new prophet who shall point their way to a new track and set them on the path which leads into the kingdom of happiness and love."

Anyone who has observed sympathetically the

¹ "Frigidity in Woman," W. Stekel,

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growth of the soul in a boy will have recognized that the readiness for love is almost or quite dormant during the early school age. At this stage boys usually display a contempt for girls, and are bored extremely by any reference to love. This is the age of primitive, exuberant activity in games, escapades and adventures, in which girls do not participate.

Puberty brings a change. The boy notes with secret pride that his voice is deepening, that down is becoming dark and more visible on his upper lip, and that his whole organism is shaping into the manly form. Almost suddenly he awakens to the attractions of the female form, and begins to look upon girls as mysteriously interesting creatures. Immature or "calf" love arises. In many cases this nascent emotion is idealized, and the boy combats sensual yearning. In other instances, the tremendous activity of the aroused endocrine glands, and the heightening of imagination, induces a definite, insistent, and vehement erotic curiosity and longing.¹

Both of the above types of boys are as near normality as are the great mass of people. The difference between them is natural. It is determined by the bodily chemistry, the heredity, the environment. But both of these lads will encounter their specific difficulties in life and love. Both are amative, both are dominated by "the tyranny of

¹ See H. G. Wells's instructive pages upon this flaring-up of erotism in youth, in "William Clissold."

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organization.” Their success or failure in love is, however, largely a question of *nurture*. Unfortunately, the chances are distinctly against the attainment of the right guidance. It is only a very small minority of boys and girls of to-day who are taught the meaning, the nature, and the conduct of love. The two boys will most probably muddle through bachelor life and wedlock, and exemplify once again the prevalence of what Lord Dawson has termed “clumsy sex-love.”

The ultra-idealistic boy may strive for and expect more than he can possibly attain, and meet with disillusionment. The tough-minded lustful boy may become the victim of his organization, and never realize the sublimity of true love.

Girls in the first stage of puberty at fourteen, and sometimes at thirteen, await love with wonder, and manifest an awakening desire for the society of young men. Their dreams are of romance, but self-consciousness of sex is not so strong in them as in boys. Many girls are entirely ignorant of sexual processes, and endeavour to banish all speculation about marital intercourse as improper or impure. It is perhaps needless to reiterate that the majority of young Western women are almost entirely untaught in the nature and manifestations of the love of the sexes, and that matrimony is, for hundreds of thousands, a startling experience, a shock, or a mental injury.

Girls are more apt than the majority of boys to

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fall in love with love. They are addicted to day-dreaming, and the weaving of love stories, in which they figure as heroines, and they devour novels describing passion. Their erotism can only be set aglow by the chosen lover's appeal, at the outset of wedlock, to their souls. Sexual desire may be scarcely conscious during wooing, and in some instances it does not awaken until some months after the wedding-day. In many cases it is never aroused, through the various causes related in other pages of this book.

The more intelligent types of girls, who are natural in the sense that their curiosity is conscious and active, muse upon every aspect of sex love, and seek enlightenment. These girls are not content to remain as little children, when the signs of developing womanhood are plainly manifest to them. For, as Havelock Ellis states,¹ the inquiring child, confronted with the enigma of his or her origin, is in "exactly the same position as the metaphysician, or the biologist, or any thinker who is faced by complex and yet unsolved problems."

The natural girl is therefore interested in love and its psychic and mental phenomena. She soon discovers, however, that such curiosity is forbidden, that the very prompting to inquiry is considered impure or indelicate; and that this is a kind of knowledge which her parents and instructor deem unnecessary and undesirable.

¹ "The Dance of Life."

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Thus the naturally reflective and inquiring girl has two courses open to her. She must suppress her curiosity to please her parents, or she must disregard their taboo, and investigate the problems, privately and furtively. If she cannot discover a confidential friend who will answer her questions, or any books that will instruct her, she is sure to create fantasies of her own, or to elaborate the surmises of her nursery days.

Amazing are the fantasies woven around love and sex by young girls in their search for knowledge! Fantasy-thought is the antithesis of direct thought. Fantasy is born in the Unconscious. It has the same source as art. The fantasies of childhood on the mystery of mysteries, Sex, are invariably misleading, and strange as it may seem, they are often accepted ultimately as facts.

This acceptance of fantastic ideas as reality may influence the whole life of the day-dreaming girl. It is not compatible with a normal sexual development. This secret brooding tends to introversion, and often produces mental conflicts that may end in hysteria, morbid obsessions, or actual insanity. Often the fantasies are of an alarming character, and the subject endeavours to shut them out from consciousness. In many cases, the effort to substitute reality for fantasy causes acute suffering in girls during courtship and in the early days of marital life.

Morbid dread is common among the women of

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our time, and these harassing fears are the source of hysteria, often accompanied by heart trouble, intestinal disorder, and other physical symptoms. This, and other insidious forms of neurotic illness, may be described as the result of a constant struggle to expel sexual ideas from the mind. Natural expression or sublimation are the alternatives of abnormal repression. We do not help our children to face reality. We do not face it boldly ourselves. Our conventional tendency is towards dishonest thinking upon sex.

A normal sex life becomes more difficult, stage by stage, in our social evolution. Economic conditions cause postponement of marriage until long after the nubile age in both sexes. Neurotic disorders, among the commonest of modern diseases, partially or totally incapacitate a vast number of persons for marriage. Instinct in love choice is continually thwarted in our society, and the brain too frequently dominates the heart of man and woman. We are enjoined to fight instinct, and often the counsel is good; but intellect alone in the selection of a mate can lead us far astray.

Monogamous marriage is difficult for many, but it is the best form of union that the cumulative experience of the West has been able to institute. Its chief legal imperfection is the enforced fettering from which the escape of the ill-matched is only possible through a tedious and costly process of divorce. The modern fear of marriage is derived

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partly from the obstacles confronting an unfortunately married pair.

“ Our current civilization is a sexual lunatic,” declares H. G. Wells. “ And it has lost its reason in this respect largely through the difficulties that stand in the way of any sane discussion of the matter as a whole. To approach it is to approach excitement. So few people seem to lead happy and healthy sexual lives that to mention the very word sexual is to set them stirring, to brighten the eye, lower the voice, and blanch or flush the cheek with a flavour of guilt. We are all as it were keeping our secrets and hiding our shame.”

The three essentials of happiness are the possession of means of subsistence, sound health, and a normal sex life. Probably of these three the lack of the last is the commonest source of misery in the higher civilized communities. Society is composed of a number of blundering would-be lovers. Every normal person craves love. Why is the craving so rarely gratified?

The question is not easily answered in a few phrases. But we may attempt to reply first with another interrogation: “ Have we endeavoured to inquire into the problem of love itself? ” Every vital subject save this has been long studied with scientific precision and caution, from economics to nutrition. The scientific approach to sex is still in its initial stage, even in the highest intellectual nations.

It is now widely recognized that we have made mistakes in diet, and that many ailments arise through

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malnutrition, under-feeding, and over-feeding. The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is quite as important for the perpetuation and well-being of the race as the satisfaction of hunger, and the instinct is on a much higher psychic plane than eating. We are learning how to eat. Maybe the time is near at hand when we shall learn how to love, and how to defeat the innumerable artificial impediments to the full, joyous, spiritualizing and refining expression of the profoundest of human emotions.



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